

Mexican Life

Mexico's Monthly Review

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NOVEMBER, 1951

No. 11, Vol. XXVII



Water Color

By J. Beltrán



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CONTENTS

NOVEMBER, 1951

Number 11, Vol. XXVII

| | Page |
|---|------|
| A BATTLE WON. Editorial | 9 |
| TACO WOMAN. Article, By Sylvia Martin | 10 |
| OIL. By Otto Butterlin | 10 |
| ENCARNACION, WHO WANTED NOTHING. Story, By Karen Shields | 11 |
| OIL. By Morris Topchevsky | 11 |
| ARCHITECTURAL BEGINNINGS. Article, By Trent Elwood Sanford | 13 |
| PHOTO. By Jose A. Rodriguez | 13 |
| THE TLACUACHE. Article, By Dane Chandos | 15 |
| WATER COLOR. By Charles X. Carlson | 15 |
| PATTERNS OF AN OLD CITY. By Howard S. Phillips | 17 |
| REHABILITATION OF THE MEXICO-LAREDO RAILWAY ROUTE. Article, By Stewart Morton | 18 |
| MUNICIPAL PROGRESS. Article, By Gerald Thornby | 20 |
| CONVENTS AND AN EXECUTION. Article, By Hudson Strod | 23 |
| WATER COLOR. By Ruth Van Sickle Ford | 23 |
| OIL. By Valetta Swann | 25 |
| A PARTY FOR THE SANTOS. Article, By Herbert Joseph Mangham | 25 |
| FRANCISCO DOSAMANTES. Critique, By Guillermo Rivas | 27 |
| UN POCO DE TODO | 31 |
| LITERARY APPRAISALS | 32 |
| CURRENT ATTRACTIONS. By Vane C. Dalton | 37 |
| ART AND PERSONAL NOTES | 40 |

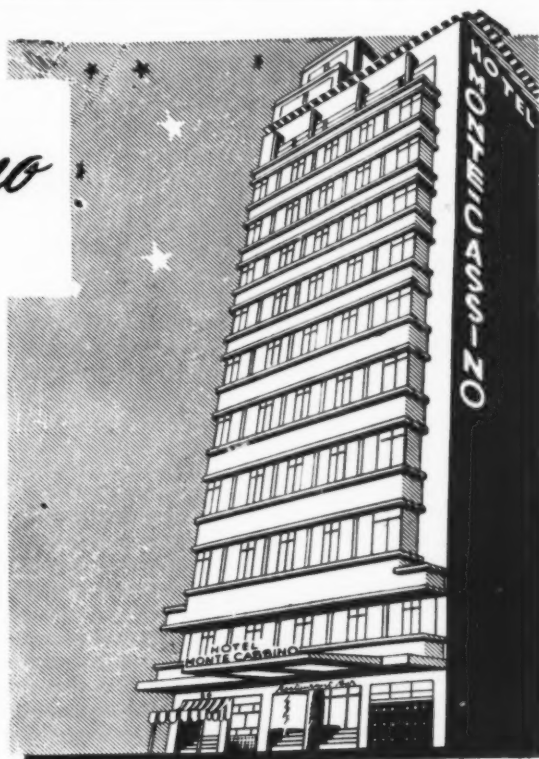
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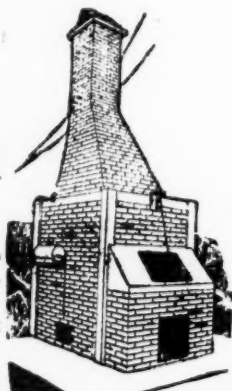
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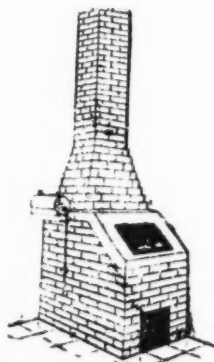
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HOWARD S. PHILLIPS

EDITOR

A Battle Won

DURING the past five years Mexico has been the scene of one of the most dramatic battles ever staged by men and science against a destructive animal disease. The foot-and-mouth plague that originated in the state of Veracruz in December of 1946, and which during its early stages of rapid expansion threatened to destroy the country's livestock, and extend beyond its borders, created an emergency problem which had to be confronted jointly by the governments of Mexico and the United States. And it was by means of effective international cooperation, by means of joint and arduous effort, that it was possible to bring the rapidly spreading disease under control and to combat it effectively.

Now, after five years of such sustained effort, the plague has been virtually eradicated and we may safely anticipate that by the beginning of 1952 the long and costly campaign will be officially concluded. For Mexico this will represent a signal victory, the winning of a battle which involved the participation of thousands of men, the loss of over a billion pesos, and the possible collapse of its entire rural economy. For in Mexico plows are still mostly drawn by oxen.

At the beginning, the plague, spreading like a prairie-fire, menaced to consume thirty-one million head of cloven-hoofed livestock—cattle, sheep, pigs, goats—as well as such wild fauna as deer, wild boar, mountain goats and sheep. The country was truly confronted by a national disaster, which was averted through the prompt and drastic measures carried out by the Mexico-United States Commission created for this purpose.

The Commission began its task by establishing quarantine lines along the northern border of the infected area, from Tampico on the Gulf to Puerto Vallarta on the Pacific, and across the South from Tonalá, Veracruz, through the State of Chiapas to Puerto Arista.

For nearly a year, all diseased and exposed animals discovered within these two quarantine lines were slaughtered and buried. In that time, almost a million large and small animals were sacrificed. By agreement, the United States paid indemnities to the owners on all large animals killed and Mexico paid for the small ones.

During the following year, the Commission decided to modify its strategy, launching a large-scale vaccination campaign supported by quarantine, disinfection, inspection, and extermination of only those animals actively infected with foot-and-mouth disease. But here it faced an initial very serious drawback, for the combined output of all the laboratories in the world was not enough to vaccinate the 14,500,000 animals within the infected area of Mexico, even once, much less the several times required.

The problem was solved toward the end of 1948, when Mexico's production of vaccine was brought up

to required volume, and the new program was launched on a large scale. The plan was based on a pincers movement, with vaccination progressing from the northern and southern quarantine lines toward the center of the infected area. As vaccination moved inward, inspectors discovered and exterminated all infected animals. These were followed by crews of disinfectors. Thus the virus would eventually die because it had no host or place to live. During this operation, it was discovered that the vaccine provided immunity for only four months. This meant that the animals had to be revaccinated periodically as long as the Commission scientists deemed it necessary.

Despite the skepticism of scientists throughout the world, absolute opposition by U.S. cattlemen who preferred the original slaughter plan as being quicker, more effective, and less expensive, Commission veterinarians went doggedly on. Mexico's infected area was divided into ten districts, each with a Mexican and U.S. veterinarian supervisor. These districts were then subdivided into sub-districts, areas and sectors, with the dual supervision extending to the lowest echelon.

The campaign was carried out with military precision; though the task was of formidable proportions. The battle had to be waged in Mexico's extremely difficult terrain, with mountains rising more than eighteen thousand feet in the central portion, dropping off to dense jungles along the coastal regions. Within the infected area, moreover, there were some 54 different Indian dialects spoken by natives who did not know Spanish and whose way of life had scarcely changed since the time of Cortés. Health and sanitation methods in many places were things unknown. Some areas, where roads were almost non-existent, were accessible only by horseback, by boat, or on foot. But all these hardships did not dismay the men who fought this farflung battle.

Now, that it has been finally won, in drawing up its summary, we find that like the proverbial ill winds the great material losses it entailed have been indirectly offset by lasting gains. Mexico has the largest and most modern laboratory in the world for scientific research and for the production of vaccine, which is even now helping to eradicate this disease in other countries. Its cattle industry has at its disposal packing and refrigeration plants it did not have before, which facilitate the export of meats; while in many places that had been affected by the plague its agriculture has been modernized with tractors that took the place of oxen.

But the greatest gain derived from this trying ordeal is defined in the splendid example of how two neighbor nations can solve their problems working shoulder to shoulder—in the practical demonstration of authentic good neighborhood.

Taco Woman

By Sylvia Martin

THE people's restaurant is the charcoal brazier set up in the street.

A horseman riding in from a distant hacienda stops to give his order. The brazier tender pats out a tortilla, rolls it around a bit of chopped meat, and drops it in the earthenware pot to fry in deep fat. The ranchero rides off eating his "taco." A market-bound woman loaded with baskets, her sleeping baby hammocked in the rebozo slung across her back, asks for a "quesadilla." The tortilla is folded over a filling of cheese and fried in the same pot or on a tin tray. Two tourists pause. "Come on, I dare you." "It smells good, but . . ."

At night the charcoal fires glow red in the dark. On fiesta nights there are rows of them, lit further by torches. Shadowy shapes move around them. A guitar is strumming, a voice sings softly. Families who have come a long way for the fiesta spend the night around the friendly fires.

The "restauranters" are mostly women making their own living or supplementing a meager family income.

Selerina García's enterprise is a step above the open street brazier. She owns a wooden stand by the bus terminal, focus of farmers and villagers going to market. Her appearance hints that she is doing well. Instead of the coarse long skirts and rebozo of her fellow tradeswomen, she wears a white apron over a neat black dress. Her black hair is smoothly arranged in a braided coronet. And she shows another infallible sign of prosperity—a gold tooth.

Every day, toiling up the steep hill to town, I met her smile when, panting for breath I reached the top. A routine makes friends in Mexico. The people you pass often smile a greeting the second or third time they see you. A "Good day" seals the acquaintance. After that you stop and talk. Small errands

take hours because of the people you visit with on your way.

I hung over Señora García's stand one morning.

"You have not met my son?" she asked.

"You have a son?"

"Yes. Today Tomás is graduating from high school." She paused to attend a customer.

"Good morning, Señora. The tacos, how much?"

"Twenty-five centavos for two, Señor."

She had them made in five minutes and handed them to him in a square of brown paper.

"My son," she resumed, "is very intelligent. He will be a great man."

"Of course," I said.

"I am sending him to the university in Mexico City to become an engineer."

She saw my astonishment.

"Why do you think I work like this?" she cried.

"Come at six in the morning, you will find me here. Pass late at night, I am here still. Why?" She seemed angry with me.

"I will tell you. For many years I was the wife—not in marriage, you understand, but the wife nevertheless—of a rich hacendado. I had Tomás by him. And then he tired of me. I live now to shame him through his son, "my" son. He wishes to become an engineer. It is a good wish. He will be a great man, and the old one that was his father will be ashamed. He will go to the university, my son, no matter what it costs me."

If Selerina García is no longer at her stand by the bus terminal, you will find her somewhere in Mexico City still making tacos while her boy attends his classes at the university. At twenty-five centavos for two, how many tacos does it take to make an engineer?





Oct.

By Morris Topchevsky.

Encarnación, who Wanted Nothing

By Karen Shields

THE taxi driver shook his head. "Before, los ricos used to dress their children well."

We were waiting in front of a large home. Like all children in the world these small ones were shouting at each other, taunting, jumping on one foot and laughing in glee. They were free, easy, and charming, playing in the grass; rather typical of Mexican children in particular, I was thinking.

But the taxi driver sighed. "Now people even here in this district don't seem to care what their children wear. Especially their shoes. At least los ricos used to keep good shoes on their children's feet."

And I remembered what had happened once, because of shoes. It was a long time ago in the days of the big plantations, in the days when people came down out of the hills of Chiapas to work for fincas in the lowlands of Tabasco. Days when the planters often kept the men like so many cattle, working from dawn to dark with little enough of a life to call their own. The men of the hills were free, but then as now, some new thing would catch their eye, and for the sake of a new kind of corn grinder or a supply of good machetes some indio would leave the hills and sell the work of his hands for a day's wage. Often enough the day's wage grew into months and years, and perhaps never again did the village see the man who had gone out into the world to buy himself the new thing. In those days too, families sometimes sold or bound out their sons and daughters to families of better luck in the towns. Of course some stayed on the big fincas because they wanted to, because they became inoculated with the same hungry fever to have things, to go to the big fiestas, or because they felt more important than their brothers in the hills.

Encarnación de Zacharías went to the big plantation because he was sent. His father sent him to Finca Lumija because he could no longer care for

the boy with the streak of bad luck he had had, and too many others to account for. He was not sure it was such a bad thing, anyway.

Encarnación did not know whether he was glad to go or not. He was not asked. But his mother, putting her hand gently on the side of his head in parting, wept a little into her dark reboso.

"Remember, Encarnación, what I tell you," she said sadly. "Nothing that you want matters in this world. I did not give you birth to work for others, but for yourself. But what I wanted only brings me sorrow, for now I can never see it happen so. Never want Encarnación, then nothing can be taken from you."

At first he did not understand too well the meaning of her words, but with service on Lumija plantation he soon learned, and remembered how she had said them, with tears in her luminous dark eyes, and a soft hand pressed against the side of his face. Nothing that he wanted had ever mattered, or gained him anything. He knew that now. It had been so from the beginning. So, with quiet indifference, he went to work for the blustering manager of the finca, and served as well as he knew how. Even when he was made house-boy in the Casa Grande, Encarnación did not change his quiet ways, for what would it have gained him?

As he grew older, Encarnación discovered that he was not like the others who worked on this finca. He was taller at sixteen than the others at twenty-five. He was long and thin, and could do things faster and with less effort than most of them. So they called him corn-stalk, and limb of a tree, and other names, some of them not so pretty, but most especially they sneered at him because he came from the hills and, so they said, was different.

Through it all Encarnación fought a man only once, but he was swift and cat-like in his motions

and ended well. After that they did not like him any the better, but they left him alone and kept their animosity to shrugs and secret laughter.

When he was nineteen, the plantation owner gave him a girl to live with. She was small, lively, gay. Not a companion for the solemn "bone-shanks" that Encarnación was, the village said. What possessed Don Gustavo to do such a thing? What use would Encarnación be to her, when the best he knew how to do was sit and stare toward the high mountains where he was born, or make carved statuettes and things with his hands to sell down the river? Except when he was working Encarnación might have been the very resurrection of Zacharias himself, without enough life to make his bones rattle. Perhaps they were a little envious and also afraid of some of the images his hands made, for the images brought good prices at fiestas, and some of them looked very much like the strange symbols used among witch doctors. So suspicion and envy grew around Encarnación like vines about a tree, but he went on his way and said nothing. In spite of the years, he remembered that he was of the hills, and could still, on a moonlight night hear in his mind and heart the throbbing rhythm of ancient songs. He did not need to go about on fiesta nights and drink and brag or show a knife like these small bravado lowlanders, for he was of the hills, a Tzendale.

The good luck of having Feliciano was more than he could have asked for, having learned early to ask for nothing. He took solemn care of her; loved her in a detached sort of way. But Feliciano, full of laughter and admiration for this husband that stood a head above the others and was always gentle when others were not, took matters into her own hands. She would laugh some gleam of wonder into his dark, brooding eyes!

All the village watched the ill-matched couple. No good would come of this sort of thing, they were sure. Of course, they couldn't really complain or find any fault with Feliciano as a wife, for the washed clothes on the grass before her hut were always clean as a new cloud, and her corn was always ground, her white *camisa* well embroidered. And Encarnación did not play the sloth where his duties were concerned. He put a new clean thatch upon the house, and built her a fine stove of clay and well shaped stones. It was more than most of the finca village had. So their tongues wagged, as tongues will, not from any fault they could find, but more for the faults they could not find.

Perhaps nothing at all would have happened to Feliciano and Encarnación had it not been for the shoes. To be sure, he knew about shoes. He had seen many of them; boots, high and polished on Don Gustavo and others like him. Also pointed toed, dainty but none-the-less imperious shoes on the feet of señoritas and señoras who came to the finca to visit La señora, Don Gustavo's wife. He knew them well from standing many hours serving in the big house on the hill, waiting for orders, sometimes with his hat in his hand, his shoulders hunched in assumed humility, sometimes with his eyes down in deference as he listened to the curt demands of these haughty ladies.

The only shoes Encarnación respected were the snubtoed, well worn shoes of the Padre to whom he had turned time and again in his agony of childhood; patient shoes, steady shoes that gave him comfort. He could tell you every line of them, although perhaps he could not have told you a single feature of the man who wore them.

His own feet had known only freedom, either without shoes at all, or with comfortable *huaraches*

to protect him from spines on the trail. He had not needed shoes. He had not wanted them. It was enough to look at them.

Enrique was the foreman, the mayor-domo of the finca. Enrique went on a trip out to the big port of Tabasco and came back with shoes on his feet. High shoes, that came well above the ankle with bright knobs of brass to catch the laces where they tied. They were shiny, foreign shoes. No one really envied Enrique these shoes. It was only that he used them so conspicuously, so carefully as to make everyone know that he was superior. He smirked with an apologetic air which spoiled everyone's pleasure in viewing the new shoes, for somehow without their knowing why, he made them feel embarrassed at their simple *huaraches*. Oh, Enrique was a clever one, and no one doubted that he would one day own even more things, and place himself above them all.

But Feliciano flounced her full skirts and shook her long braids and said quite sharply, "My Encarnación is as good as Enrique—a better man in his soul. If anyone wears shoes about here it should be Encarnación!"

Feliciano spoke to Encarnación about it. He was sitting in the doorway of their house carving a long thin figure out of a bit of *barri* wood. Feliciano came in the back door with a basket of corn still dripping from its washing in the stream. She went and stood beside him, and he felt the movement of her full skirt against his legs and the light pressure of her knee on his arm. He did not move, but sat there, knowing the warmth of her, knowing how her face looked in the doorshadow; soft black hair parted above a clear forehead, her long dark eyes, and the perfect nectarine color of her oval cheeks. More than all he knew how her mouth looked, full of laughter and yet soft, like moist flower petals, and fragrant.

"Enrique has come back. He has shoes. Such shoes. They are very fine. The kind of shoes a man like you should wear."

Encarnación did not answer.

"Why is it you never buy anything with all the extra money you earn? It would be a good thing for these people to see you with shoes on your feet. Perhaps then they would respect you and would know you to be superior. Then they would not say the things they do. What did Enrique come from? Nothing. He is a piece of rotten log that someone pulled up on the shore and made a table of. But you. You could really wear shoes!"

Her voice was soft with just enough of pride in it to sting Encarnación to protest. His feet were good enough as they were. Why would shoes make his soul any better? "Besides," he said slowly, turning the wooden figure around and looking at it thoughtfully, "besides, it is not good to want things. It only brings sorrow when they are not given you."

These last words Feliciano had heard all too often before. She looked down at him, moving her full skirt a little in petulance. It swished against his hands, over the image he was making. But her voice was soft and tender as his eyes always were when he looked at her. "Some day I shall carry an image of you in my arms and then you will want something."

Encarnación, hearing the words but listening more to the voice, knew instinctively that she was right. That he would want. And he knew that he loved Feliciano and wanted her. For she was all the love and laughter his life had ever known. It frightened him to know this was so. He looked out across the green grass, across the finca to the line of thatched roofs against the afternoon sky. They were mauve-colored



Photo.

By José A. Rodríguez.

Architectural Beginnings

By Trent Elwood Sanford

NOT FAR south of Mexico City there is an extensive barren waste of broken volcanic rock known as El Pedregal, "The Stony Place."

Great chunks of basaltic lava, piled up, stretch on as the eye can reach, like a vast, choppy black sea. For many years this irregular, petrified sea was a favorite hide-out for bandits, and many are the stories of travelers lost forever in its forbidding bleakness and of treasures hidden there in caves in days long gone by. In more recent years quarries have been opened up at its edge, to provide stone for Mexico's new network of highways; and still more recently it has become an archaeological treasure ground. Reaching, on its northern boundary, from one corner of the city's southern suburbs almost to another, it was some thousands of years ago that Mount Ajusco, which towers to the south, spewed its molten lava to a depth of twenty or thirty feet, burying whatever villages lay in its path, but sparing one structure—the oldest discovered monument to civilization on the American continent.

That structure, at the south edge of the waste near the suburb of Tlalpam, is a large circular mound rising in a series of terraces faced with stones. A deep accumulation of earth upon its sloping walls is indication that the mound had been abandoned long before the eruption occurred. There is not sufficient evidence to approximate more than roughly the date when the structure was built; but, based on geological investigations of the lava flow which surrounded and partially covered it, it is probable that it was built before the Greeks built the Parthenon in Athens, almost five

centuries before the birth of Christ, and it is quite possible that it was already there when Cheops was constructing his great pyramid-tomb in Egypt, more than two thousand years before that. In either event, the Pyramid of Cuiculeo, as it is known, is the oldest building yet found on this continent and is assigned to a period spoken of as Archaic, a term which means old but not necessarily primitive. Its name is Aztec and means "Place of Color and Song."

This so-called pyramid is not in reality a pyramid at all, but, geometrically speaking, is a series of superimposed truncated cones, with a circular base 400 feet in diameter and reaching to a height of about 60 feet. From the eastern side of the first terrace, walls 30 feet apart, extending for a distance of about 70 feet, appear to have originally supported a stairway or ramp. The present condition of the stone and clay fill between these walls does not make it possible to determine whether the builders had yet learned to construct evenly spaced steps. Over a central core of filled earth, the sloping walls of the structure were built of crude cyclopean masonry, with no evidence of any mortar having been used and with no evidence of chipped or hewn stones. The surface is formed of large chunks of basaltic lava compactly piled, with the smaller ends pointing toward the center at right angles to the surface and embedded against smaller chunks of lava. There is no indication that these stones had been worked; and no stone mauls have been found in the vicinity. Investigations have indicated that the pile had been reconstructed and enlarged

several times, perhaps centuries apart, and between volcanic eruptions. The lava rock used in facing the structure, even in the most recent part, is unquestionably of a flow antedating that of the Pedregal. Not a piece of the Pedregal lava has been found in the walls or in the loose piles of rock on top.

The central portion is a fill of clay and sand; and the flat top is of clay, forming a platform 290 feet in diameter. In the center of the top platform a secondary platform of rock and clay some 55 feet in diameter supports a horseshoe-shaped altar 22 feet long and 9 feet wide, built of waterworn boulders and clay. The curved eastern half of the altar is raised two feet above the floor of the western half and is enclosed by a rough stone wall extending up another foot. Whether this rather crude altar was enclosed in a temple of less permanent materials can only be conjectured, for nothing else remains; but the elemental arrangement of the whole is similar to that of later structures, which were always composed of two parts—a high platform, usually in the form of a truncated pyramid (that is, flat on top), and a superstructure in the form of an altar or shrine, which though structurally much smaller, was the reason for the large masonry base. For the Mexican temple, unlike the Christian church, was not intended for congregational use, but was a high-placed altar used in sacrificial rites.

It is not unlikely that this stone mound was derived in shape from the near-by volcanoes. The Fire God is one of the few deities which, from evidences of clay figurines found at the site, can be identified with the Archaic period; and what with Mount Ajusco pouring forth smoke close by and the lofty cone of Popocatepetl in another direction dominating the scene and frequently spouting fire, it can be assumed that a temple or a base for a shrine should be copied from these huge cones. When at night the glow from the volcanoes lit up the sky, these worshippers of the God of Fire must have looked with awe and respectful fear at the workings of their deity.

Whether or not the early builders could have achieved a more finished masonry job on the substructure is immaterial with regard to their aim (even in later pyramids, though the surface as of dressed masonry covered with stucco and painted in bright colors, the core was of rubble, earth, and adobe) for the purpose was to gain height, to gain effect—a construction dictated by their religion. As was also the case in later architectural examples, as shown in the work of the Mayas and especially in the pyramids of the Toltecs, structural perfection was subordinated to exterior effect. Functionally the structure can be said to have achieved its purpose. The supposedly recent revolutionary principle that "form follows function" is an elemental thesis subscribed to and practiced by the Archaic civilization more than two thousand years ago.

In spite of lack of evidence of tools used in the construction of the mound, pottery, clay figurines, and crudely chipped obsidian knives have been found near the base. They have also been found on the other side of Pedregal, where at Copileo, skeletons of Archaic man have been discovered buried beneath the lava flow, together with pottery (fragments of which show traces of polychrome decoration, stone household utensils such as the maize grinder (metate), and obsidian weapons, all buried before the great eruption occurred.

The human burials are especially significant. The graves, provided with full equipment for use in the next world, show an early belief in immortality; while fossilized maize cobs attest the agricultural development of the people, as the metates do their food habits. The maize grinders found there can hardly be distinguished from those in use all over the country today.

Relics similar to those found at Copileo have been

unearthed in a number of places over an area extending from the Valley of Mexico into Guatemala, and even into South America, indicating that that early phase of culture was widespread. The fact that in the Pedregal there are no overlying containing objects of the successively later Toltec and Aztec cultures, as is the case in most stratification of remains on the Mexican plateau, affords further evidence of the age of that lava flow, while the nature of the pottery and the obsidian tools buried there establishes the Archaic civilization as the oldest of them all.

But of architecture of that period, Cuicuilco stands alone, and even more than the other relics, it gives us some insight into the people of the time. Crude as it is, it furnishes not only a key to their knowledge, both technical and aesthetic, and to some degree their religious beliefs and habits, but also something of their political unity and their social organization. The construction of such a mound as Cuicuilco indicates a developed religion and an organization of labor to carry out the work of creating a suitable place for the expression of that religion. Its orientation to the four points of the compass further indicates the beginning of an appreciation of the movements of the heavenly bodies and the effect on the seasons and the crops—the rudiments of an astronomical knowledge so highly developed by later civilizations.

When Cuicuilco was excavated it was found to have been covered by successive layers of rock and ashes caused by periodic volcanic eruptions, with periods of flood alternately filling its walls with sediment. The pyramid had been so thoroughly covered with rock and soil that the early stone walls remained reasonably well protected. More than fifteen feet of alternating sand and clay and rock covered the flat top, an indication of at least several hundred years of desertion before Mount Ajusco spilled over to envelop it. In order to determine its true dimensions it was necessary not only to clear away the many layers of earth covering its walls and its flat top but also to blast away the crust of hard volcanic rock which covered the base, leaving what appears to be a moat surrounding the structure.

A low hill rising out of the lava flow had long been known to the natives of the vicinity and by them was called San Cuicuilco. When excavations were begun upon it some twenty years ago, there were many who saw manifestations in the sky that indicated treasure buried there by the Aztecs and the Spaniards. As the work of the archaeologists progressed there were some who suddenly remembered that the mound was the tomb of an Aztec chieftain buried there midst many objects of gold and silver and precious stones (treasure which did not materialize), but before that time the nature of the hill had apparently not even been suspected by the people who long had called it by name. There are not even traditions regarding the great eruption of Ajusco, a catastrophe so devastating in its consequences that it must have been remembered through many generations of men—further indication of the age of the rough black sea of rock and of the still older monument which it tried to swallow. Any traditions that there may have been have disappeared in antiquity.

Whatever colorful ceremonies may once have been held on its summit one can now only guess, and the only signs of life near by are great pepper trees whose drooping, colorful branches extend over the edge of the moat. Upstarts, indeed, for the first pepper tree grew in Mexico a mere four hundred years ago, when the seed was sent from Peru.

But what of the people who built it? Who were they and where did they come from? It is hardly within

Continued on page 62



Water Color.

By Charles X. Carlson.

The Tlacuache

By Dane Chandos

THE days were full of cool, rain-washed air, and the nights reeled with great distant flashing storms, and every day by midafternoon lightning flickered and glimmered all round the vast horizon. Every night determined steady rain fell for several hours—good growing rain, not so violent as to wash away the soil from young roots, not so light as to dampen only a thin surface, which would parch in two hours of the morning sun. The days were often clouded, and the lake was a sheen of pewter. There were no spectacular sunsets, but luminous yellows, from white gold to lemon, shone behind the western mountains and painted high lights on the pewter. Most evenings, at sundown, we sat watching on the terrace, and, as it grew dark, the fireflies went busily and erratically about the huerta.

But one night it was still and velvet dark. Only beyond the farthest mountains came an occasional reflection of lightning. I heard my dogs giving a peculiar bark, a sharp sustained staccato. I went out into the blackness of the huerta. They were standing poised at each side of a pile of adobes as if they had something cornered there, and on top of the adobes Minou the kitten, daughter of Mariposa, who belonged to the house where I had lived when I first came to Ajijie, was pawing like an angry horse and growling. In the thick grass my flash picked up a little creature, apparently dead. It had grayish, white-tipped fur, a sharp nose and a long tail. I bent down beside it and touched its body, which was warm. Then suddenly I

felt the little beat of its heart. It didn't move, not even when I stroked its head. Its fur felt clean and appetizing, much more so than my dogs' coats although they are groomed every day. I thought what tremendous courage it was showing, lying still, shamming dead while I, a presumably hostile giant, crouched over it. I stroked it again. Then I called off the dogs and carried the cat indoors. By the time I went back the little creature had gone.

"Of course it was a tlacuache," said Cayetano scornfully next morning. "Why didn't you call me to kill it with a stick? They do much damage, they eat the fruit, and one day with another they'll take a chicken. And instead of calling me, you stroked it, which was a very dangerous thing indeed to do, for they lie like that, they make dead, and then they turn round and bite very strongly."

It simply hadn't occurred to me as I stroked the opossum that it might bite me.

"Never mind, Cayetano," I said. "I have now really and truly seen and touched a possum playing possum."

"Sometimes," said Silvanito, "when the little ones are riding on their mother's back, one falls off, and if you catch it quickly, you can bring it up tame."

Cayetano was a study in disapproval, but I told Silvanito to bring me a baby opossum if he found one. I like to have animals about the place. Apart from the hens and pigs, which I have kept since coming to Ajijie, we have had rabbits, a kid, and a small

deer. Of my dogs, Tippet, the Dachshund, is now six. She is sprightly, and her inquisitive German nose is forever poking itself into other people's business. On one occasion, investigating some wires that were no possible concern of hers, she received a nasty electric shock, and, as the result of an encounter with a resentful scorpion, she retains a habit of rolling her lips back from her teeth out of reach of the creature's tail and snorting whenever she meets another of his kind. Cayetano's little Chihuahueño, Mutzia, is with us no longer, but he has left a daughter by Tippet, one of a family of three, all of whose little tummies were so fat that they could only lie on their backs in the soap box that was their first home. Two of the puppies we gave away. One bitch we kept, a small brown dumpy creature with the bare excuse for a tail and an inexhaustible capacity for wagging it, eating, and indulging herself with illicit activities of every kind. Within a couple of days of the departure of her brother and sister she satisfied her appetite on the cover of Terry's Guide to Mexico.

"Little monkey," said Francoise, whose book it was.

I bought her a fresh copy, but Monkey remained the puppy's name, later shortened to Monk. To translate this into Spanish for the servants was not easy. El monje, the literal translation, was received, on account of the sex of the animal, with sheepish grins and horrified giggles. Candelaria at once altered the gender to La Monja. And in the kitchen she has since been known as The Nun.

Apart from the dogs there are Minou and such occasional arrivals as Mr. Humpel's parrots and a tortoise, named, optimistically, Methuselah, which was a present from Aurora and now lives contentedly in the huerta, near the lettuce beds. I am always ready to receive a fresh animal, and the idea of a baby opossum appealed to me. The Professor was the only other person to share my feelings, but then he was intensely interested in everything, apparently, except his own subject, history.

"Nothing really new has happened since the Reformation," he said. "Just variations on a series of themes. A baby opossum now—Tell me, that one you just saw, did you happen to notice its apposable hind toe?"

There is nothing to do in Ajijic, but the Professor managed to keep himself busy all the time. He knew half the village by name, many more than I did, and he knew what they earned, and what they owed, too. Mrs. Fountannev went her serene way, writing long letters to her married daughter, working for hours at her embroidery, whose long stitches covered the canvas with bold Florentine designs, and quite often playing poker with Mr. Humpel. Everything went smoothly, and Mr. Humpel told me every day about the state of his bowels. Candelaria, however, was disappointed in our guests. The idea of an inn had excited her, for she likes to be put on her mettle and had looked forward to a life of constant variety. But the Fountannevs, though appreciative of her cooking, did not inspire her, and about every third day the Professor's stomach, which followed his mood, would prevent her from making some succulent dish she was longing to make.

"And the señor of down there," she said, "he of the oven, you do not know what he makes. All the morning he is arranging his meal, and in the time that I could cook for twenty or thirty, and many dishes, or for forty, all he has is a big hunk of pig's meat and many, many potatoes, with the cigar ash that falls in all the time, and some little cucumbers in vinegar. And his bread is not rising. I looked as I passed."

* * *

THERE was a knock at the door.

I can often guess my callers by their knocks. Aurora, when she comes with the washing, taps timidly as if expecting to be scolded, and somehow she manages to transmit a sigh from her knuckle onto the door panel. And I always know the madwoman, who comes every day to collect her tortilla sandwich from the kitchen: she has a conversation with the door, and chuckles at it before she knocks. Venustiano strikes the door firmly, says, "It is I, may I pass?" and then sits down outside and waits. But this knock was none of these. It was a knock like thunder.

"It's a little one, señor," said Nieves, coming into the room carrying her dust pan and a newspaper. "and he says if you don't want to buy this periodical?"

I hadn't seen a paper in two weeks, and it was only a day old.

"He asks ten centavos," said Nieves.

But when the boy had gone, I found he had left me only the second half of the paper, the sports and murder section. Later I found he had sold the front half to Venustiano—also for ten centavos.

The next morning the boy brought a paper again, and I went out to see him. Again he offered me the back half of a day-old newspaper.

"You only left me half the paper yesterday," I said, "the half I didn't want, and you charged me ten centavos, the price of the whole paper."

He was a bright-looking boy of nine or ten, I judged. He was wearing a very clean white shirt of a strong cotton material they call Indian's head, and the rest of him was filthy.

"But now it is easy, señor," he said. "Now that I know the pages you want I can arrange with another to buy the other pages—many prefer them. It is very simple. I go and come."

He was back in a flash, carrying the front half of the Guadalajara newspaper and eating a radish as big as a turnip.

"Yes, that's the part I want. How much?"

"Ten centavos," he said and spat out a piece of radish.

"But that is the price of the whole paper."

"How not, pues."

"Well, this is only half of it."

"That yes, yes, señor," he said, taking another bite at the radish. "How else do I make my little negotiation?"

I paid him the ten centavos. Newspapers had never come regularly to Ajijic, and I welcomed the chance of getting one daily. I agreed in future to pay him twenty centavos for the whole paper, and every day for two weeks a paper came. Sometimes it came in the middle of lunch, and sometimes it arrived after dark. Usually the boy delivered it himself, but sometimes his younger sister brought it. And once his mother brought it.

"Today," she said proudly, "my children have both gone to school. Wouldn't you like to buy this little woven basket as well? It's very fine."

For nearly a month I received my day-old copy of the newspaper regularly, and then one day it didn't come. Nor in the morning of the day after that. But in the afternoon the boy marched into the patio.

"Bulmarío Sánchez to serve you again, señor," he said, grinning with pride and holding up a bunch of that day's newspapers. "Look you, señor, now they catch the early bus from the city. Now already today, for only twenty-five centavos, I bring you the little periodical of tomorrow."

Patterns of an Old City

VOICES IN A VOID

By Howard S. Phillips

HE KNEW that he was doing a perfectly irrational thing when he paid the man on the sidewalk two pesos for the two tiny skeletons. He knew that he was yielding to some obscure compulsion, some aberrant whim, in rashly throwing away good money for something which could be of no earthly use; and yet he could not restrain the impulse.

He had been straggling along with the sluggish throngs in Avenida San Juan de Letrán, as he did every evening at this hour, idly pausing to look at the exhibits of gewgaws or the performance of vociferous hucksters along the curb, moving slowly, for he was in no hurry to catch the bus that would take him home, when his attention became arrested on the two little white skeletons that were dancing a merry jig over the sidewalk, guided by what seemed to be nothing more than the uncanny hypnotic movements of the hawk's hands over their heads. He stood looking, fascinated by the weird performance, taking in the glib spiel of the man who crouched on the curb: at first merely a bystander, merely a spectator enjoying a gratuitous show, then, as the words—"At two pesos the pair, señores! The greatest little gift to take home, to amuse and mystify the young and old... at two pesos the pair... it's a gift at the price!... The greatest little gift... only two pesos!"—sank in his mind, the irrational thought slowly emerged and took form. That's it, he thought. To amuse and mystify. He knew that there was absolutely no reason or purpose in what he was doing; he knew that he was confronting one of those rare experiences in life when a man acts recklessly, illogically, prompted by an incomprehensible and preposterous whimsy, and yet he reached for his billfold, extracted two peso bills and handed them to the hawk. The man deftly wrapped the tiny skeletons in a scrap of newspaper and thanking him demonstratively, pointing out that here was another wise man who knew a good thing when he saw it, handed him the package. He stuck it in his coat-pocket and backed away from the crowd without looking at anyone, feeling slightly ashamed at his folly.

He resumed his walk amid the stamping crowd, his eyes no longer attracted by the gaudy stuff cluttering up the sidewalk. He was deeply baffled by his incongruous deed. His mind sought to probe its waywardness, to comprehend its absurdity, while his hand protectively rested over his bulging pocket. The little dead ones, he thought, are now resting. They are dead, completely dead inside my pocket. Will I be able to make them come to life? They are not funny unless they are imbued with motion. They are a joke—a joke on death, on themselves, on the greatest joke life plays on man. Maybe there was something like that, he thought, some specific meaning, some hidden motive, in the back of my mind when I bought them. Surely, there must be a reason, even if sometimes we cannot readily perceive it, which prompts us to do whatever we do. Maybe it is because Christmas is coming soon, and one has a feeling that it's time to be shopping for toys. But these musings offered no satisfactory answer. There was no child for whom he could buy Christmas toys. There was absolutely no one whom he could present this kind of a gift, and he was quite sure that he did not buy it solely for his own amusement.

And then, like a throb of sudden pain, the vision of Lalo emerged in his mind, a dreadful vision of stark and irremediable grief breaking through the barrier

of self-preservation, and he shrank from it, instinctively sought to brush it away; to flee from it, as one seeks to flee from pain, from danger, from the tormenting awareness of irreparable loss. Lalo was dead and nine years was a long time. He was an old man without a grandson. So there was no Christmas really—no one whom he could amuse with an odd toy. There was only himself, and there was of course the old one, his *vieja*. But she could not be amused. Not by him at any rate. The thought that he would have to conceal from her his preposterous purchase oppressively broke into his musings.

He had to wait a long time before his bus came, and when it finally came it was jammed as always, so that even to board it, to squeeze through unharmed and grasp a hold on the overhead rail was a precarious feat. Cautiously his hand rested over the package in his pocket to protect it from being crushed or stolen. It was a totally worthless thing, an object of no tangible value, an embarrassing testimony of sheer folly, and yet in some puzzling way it seemed to him momentous and precious.

The bus lumbered through the dense traffic, turned to the right after a prolonged halt before the semaphore, turned again to the left at the next corner and continued at a creeping pace amid the slow, congested stream of vehicles down the Avenida de San Cosme. This was always the most trying part of the journey, a period of endless starts and stops, of further increase in the human cargo, of crawling, laborious motion, the initial pushing through a clogged, agglutinated and roaring maze to a partial liberation down the long stretch of the avenida, and the final release when the bus gathered speed turning into the quieter, darker streets of the suburbs.

Clasping the overhead rail, firmly wedged in the huddle, his head heavy, his lungs laboring for breath, he sought escape from his acute discomfort in continued musing. Each night he found a measure of relief from the ordeal of his homeward journey in letting his mind stray from his oppressive midst, in thinking about some unfinished detail of his day's business, or of tomorrow's prospects, or of some trivial recent experience, or the things he read in the paper. But now his mind was dwelling on the package he so cautiously guarded in his pocket.

No, he thought. There would be no possible way of justifying his outlandish deed. There it was. He was taking it home. But what would he do with it? It was not a useless object. It had an obvious purpose. Its purpose was to create amusement. But whom could he amuse with it?... If it could bring forth a look of wonder in the eyes of a child, a joyous peal of laughter, if he could just create amusement for someone, it would more than justify itself. But where? How? There was no one indeed. No one at all. Only he and his *vieja*. And she could never be amused by anything he did. It was utterly impossible for him, nor would he ever attempt, to arouse in her even a fleeting spark of normal cheer, to break through the wall of aversion, of bleak resentment erected gradually through the many years of their life together. There was no room for a thing like that. He could, in her acrimonious tolerance, be detestable, unworthy, even pitiable perhaps; but he could never be diverting.

Continued on page 46

Rehabilitation of the Mexico-Laredo Railway Route

By Stewart Morton

THE railway route between Mexico City and Nuevo Laredo is one of the most important of the national network, not only because it is the shortest route between the Capital of the Republic and the United States, but likewise because it traverses vast regions of highly varied and advanced economic development and connects cities of large population and outstanding importance. Jointly with the Mexico-Ciudad Juárez route it comprises what may be justly considered as the backbone of the country's railway communications.

Eight states of the Republic—those of Mexico, Hidalgo, Queretaro, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas, and the Federal District, are communicated by this line. The diversity of natural resources, of agricultural and industrial enterprise, along its course of 1,290 kilometers is extremely rich, and this results in a very large volume of freight traffic. Added to this, the route must also take care of the import and export freight to and from Mexico, the United States and Canada.

Linking Mexico City with the cities of Queretaro, San Luis Potosí, Saltillo, Monterrey and Nuevo Laredo, and with numerous smaller cities and towns along its course, this line has to accommodate a heavy national passenger traffic.

Because of these reasons, the government of President Miguel Aleman has exerted special effort in modernizing the entire length of this route and in maintaining it in perfect working order. The modernization of this route has, in fact, comprised a salient point in the Aleman plan to rehabilitate the national system of railways.

* * *

It was in September of 1880 that President Porfirio Diaz granted a concession to James Sullivan, who represented a group of Denver, Colorado, financiers, to construct narrow-gauge railways from Mexico City to Manzanillo, and from Mexico City to Nuevo Laredo.

The concession covered a period of 99 years, at the end of which the two lines, the former named Central Railways of Mexico and the latter, National Railways of Mexico, would become the property of the nation. The Mexico City-Laredo road was inaugurated by President Diaz in November of 1888.

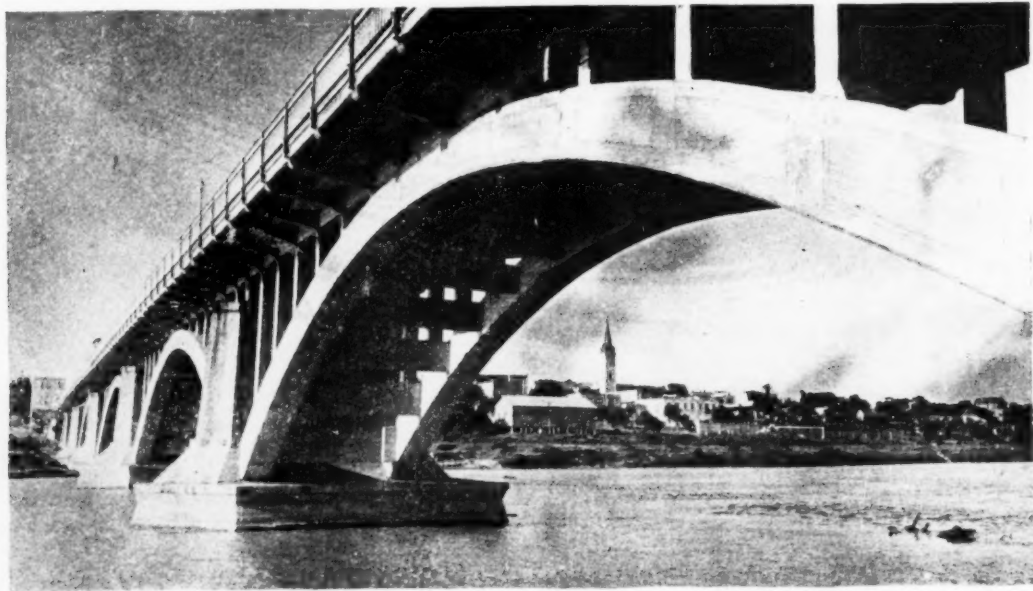
In 1903 the road was widened to standard gauge and its 40 and 45 pound rail was replaced with that of 56 and 70 pound weight. During the same year the Mexican Government, upon obtaining control of the railway lines through the acquisition of 51% of their stock, merged them into a unified system under the name of National Railways of Mexico. In 1909, the rail was replaced again, this time with that of 70 and 85 pound weight.

The steadily increasing volume of freight and passenger traffic has, however, made it necessary in recent years to rehabilitate the entire route with rail of 112 pounds. The task was begun in 1938, and up the end of 1946 an extension of 369 kilometers was provided with rail of this weight. This still left 921 kilometers, or nearly three fourths of its course to be rehabilitated, and it was up to the present government to complete the task.

"The Aleman Plan for Railway Rehabilitation," personally traced and directed by President Aleman, and executed by the present Administration of National Railways of Mexico under the brilliant direction of Lic. Manuel R. Palacios, includes as a point of vital importance the complete rehabilitation of the line to Laredo.

The project fundamentally consisted of equipping this entire route with 112 pound rail, of renewing the cross-ties and rebuilding the road-bed, so that it may be able to support the weight of heavier trains and the speed of Diesel locomotives. The task, begun in 1947, was fully concluded in August of this year.

The scope of rehabilitation also included the modernization or construction of repair shops and round houses at various points along this route, and the initiation of building new and modern passenger and



International bridge connecting Laredo, Texas with Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas.

freight stations at Monterrey and Nuevo Laredo and of the great central terminal in Mexico City.

With all these works the line to Laredo has been transformed into one that can be compared with the best in the world. Today, Diesel locomotives can travel over this line at highest speed and pulling power, within the safest margin of safety.

The complete rehabilitation of this line was urgently necessary in order to improve the service of the constantly growing passenger and freight traffic—a growth reflecting the swift economic and social progress of the country.

In its present rehabilitated state, this route contributes to an incalculable degree to the social and economic development not solely of the regions it directly traverses, but practically to that of the entire country, since it provides an outlet for many other highly productive zones of the Republic by way of the following connecting lines:

At Monterrey, with the line to Paredon which joins those to Torreon and Piedras Negras, and those to Matamoros and Tampico; at Saltillo, with the line to Torreon, which connects with that to Ciudad Juarez; at San Luis Potosí, with the lines to Aguascalientes and Tampico; at Rio Laja, with the branch to Pozos; at Empalme Escobedo with the line to Acambaro, Morelia and Uruapan, and at Queretaro, with the lines to Ciudad Juarez, Guadalajara and Manzanillo.

As regards passenger traffic, the reconditioning of this route was likewise urgently necessary because it serves as the directest line for tourists from the United States and Canada who travel to Mexico by rail. From the first day of November, 1948, this traffic has been greatly facilitated by the rapid Diesel-powered train "Aguila Azteca," which covers the distance between Mexico City and Nuevo Laredo in 24 hours, making connection at the latter point with the "Texas Eagle" train of the Missouri Pacific to Saint Louis, Mo. This international service provides a speedy and comfortable journey from Saint Louis, Mo. to Mexico City in 48 hours.

For the traveler from the United States the route does not solely offer the inducement of speed and comfort, but also the opportunity to visit along the way cities of outstanding historical interest, rich in native traditions and architectural beauty. These are as follows:

Monterrey, Mexico's foremost industrial center, A modern city preserving an ancient charm.

Saltillo, with its opulent historical background, agreeable climate, and typical native handicrafts.

San Luis Potosí, with its balmy climate, and an array of Colonial monuments basking in an air of a bygone age.

Dolores Hidalgo, the cradle of National Independence.

San Miguel Allende, a relique of ancient Mexico and a fascinating landscape.



Manuel R. Palacios, General Manager of the National Railways of Mexico, under whose direction the rehabilitation of the Laredo line was carried out.

Queretaro, a city of splendid Colonial buildings, where every corner is replete with historical lore. There, Emperor Maximilian spent his last days before he faced his execution on the Cerro de las Campanas, and there, also, the new Constitution of the Republic was approved in 1917.

And finally the City of Mexico, the unique metropolis on this continent, with all its countless multifaceted attractions for any traveler from abroad.

* * *

Many years of effort, on the part of private initiative and the recent governments, are represented in the long history of this route. Since the Mexican National Construction Company, under the audacious direction of James Sullivan, initiated its survey 71 years ago, to its final modernization by the government of President Aleman, a great store of human energy and many millions of pesos have been invested in it. But the price that has been paid has not been too great. For the Laredo-Mexico City route of the National Railways is truly a route of national progress.

Placing 112 pound rail along the Laredo line.





New Building housing the Department of Public Registry of Property.

Municipal Progress

By Gerald Thornby

IN THE annals of municipal progress, this year has been rich in signal achievement. Numerous major projects have been concluded and placed in service by the government of the Federal District, for the benefit of its rapidly growing population, including the Lerma water system, which definitely and for years to come solves the problem of water supply; the opening of various new and extensive thoroughfares that help to relieve traffic congestion and open new districts for urbanization, and the establishment of numerous new schools.

Considering that the budget of the Treasury of the Federal District represents this year the sum of 275,000,000.00 pesos—which is indeed an extremely low figure for a territory comprising a population of 3,049,372—the scope of work achieved by the government is truly prodigious.

Cognizant of the increasing educational needs in the Federal District Lic. Fernando Casas Alemán, dynamic chief of the municipal administration, has devoted during the past five years an important share of the budget at his disposal to the construction of ultra-modern school buildings appropriately located in different sections of the city and outlying districts. Averaging twenty for each year of his administration, Lic. Casas Alemán will have delivered at the end of this year a total of a hundred schools to the Secretariat of Public Education, which provide room for more than a hundred and twenty thousand pupils.

* * *

During these past five years, this city has celebrated repeated gala occasions on the days when the President of the Republic has inaugurated numerous municipal projects, and the last of these was on the 19th. of this month. On this day, President Miguel Alemán, accompanied by Lic. Fernando Casas Alemán and other high officials of the government, inaugurated a series of public works which represent an investment of twenty-four million pesos.

The initial step along the President's extensive itinerary was at Calle Rosa Verde, in the municipality of Mixcoac, where he inaugurated a splendid school building, named "República del Ecuador." Ultra-modern in plan and architecture, this building has a capacity for 800 pupils, and amply provides for the needs of this growing suburban district. The Ambassador of Ecuador, Sr. Homero Vitarí Lafronte, took part in the ceremony, expressing in a brief address his country's gratitude to Mexico for the symbol of friendship defined in the name of this school.

Following this inauguration, the President, escorted by his party, proceeded to the crossing of the Avenidas Insurgentes and Chapultepec, where he turned on the switch of the new lighting system installed over the length of the latter Avenida as far as the Avenida Presidente Alemán.

The subsequent ceremony took place in the magnificent new edifice at the corner of Calzada Villalongin and Jardín Carlos Finlay, assigned to the Department of Public Registry of Property. Unique and imposing in its strictly functional architectural design,



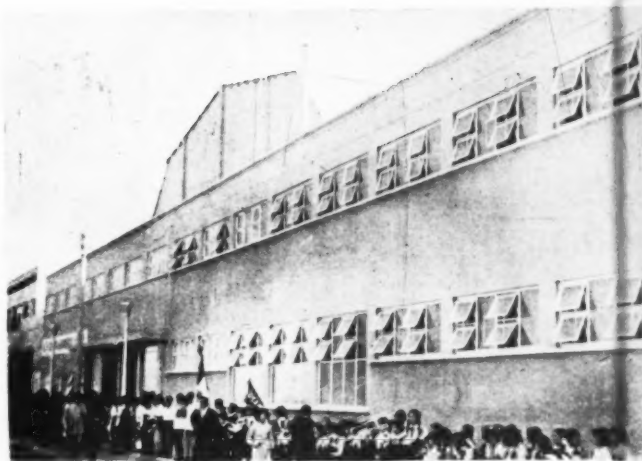
Scene along President Aleman's journey of inaugurations.

this six-story building, representing an investment of almost ten million pesos, provides utmost facilities for efficient public service.

At the corner of Avenida Cuiclahuac and Calle de Mar Mediterraneo, in the precinct of Tacuba, President Alemán unveiled a commemorative plaque in the vestibule of the school "Orozco y Berra," a handsome, spacious building, planned to accommodate 1,200 pupils and upon which the city government spent 1,261,342,66 pesos.

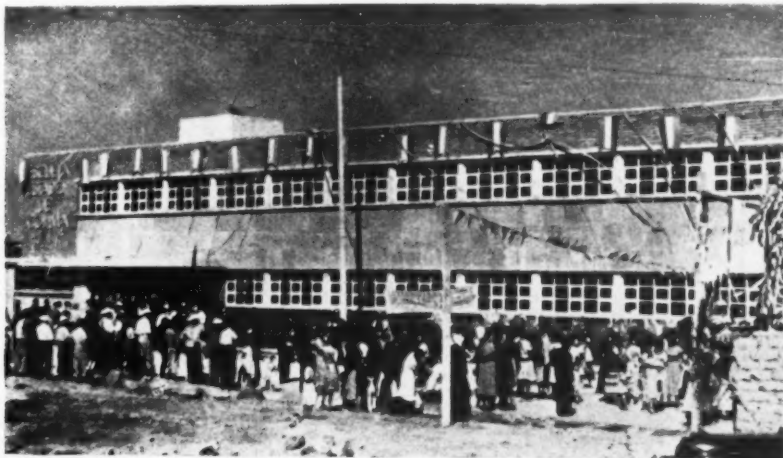
A similar ceremony followed at the school named "La Prensa," situated at the corner of Donizetti and Constantino streets, in the Colonia Vallejo. The building of this school was partly financed with funds collected through popular subscription sponsored by the local daily "La Prensa." The ceremony at this school, attended by all the editors of our daily press, also served as a symbolic inauguration of two other new schools, named "Acayucan" and "Ignacio Zaragoza," and situated in other precincts of the Federal District.

The next stop along the President's itinerary was at the "Gimnasio de las Juventudes," which was erected by the municipal government at the corner of Marta and Otilia streets, in the colonia Guadalupe-Tepeyac. The magnificent structure houses an athletic recreation center—one of a number of similar structures the government plans to construct in different sections of the city—and consists of a spacious gymnasium provided with all types of equipment for indoor sports



"Gimnasio de las Juventudes," the new athletic recreation center in the colonia Guadalupe-Tepeyac.

The splendid new school building in the village of Culhuacán.



and athletics, a basket-ball and fronton court, bowling alleys, a library and reading room. The building represents an investment of 1,300,000.00 pesos.

From this point the President and his large escort proceeded to the town of Culhuacán, at the far end of the district of Coyoacán, to unveil a plaque at the schoolhouse named "Estado de Colima." Situated in the center of this agricultural community the new schoolhouse is its most imposing edifice. It has a capacity for a thousand pupils and was built at the cost of 949,994.22 pesos.

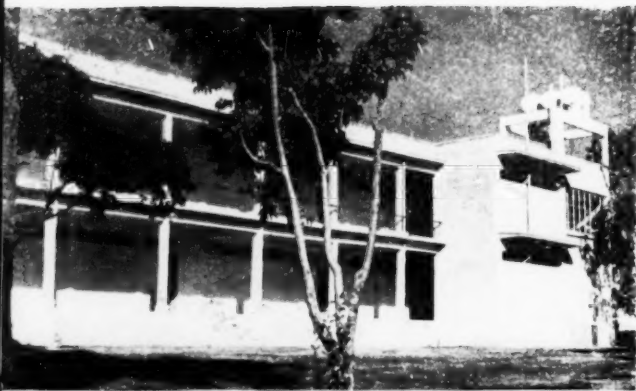
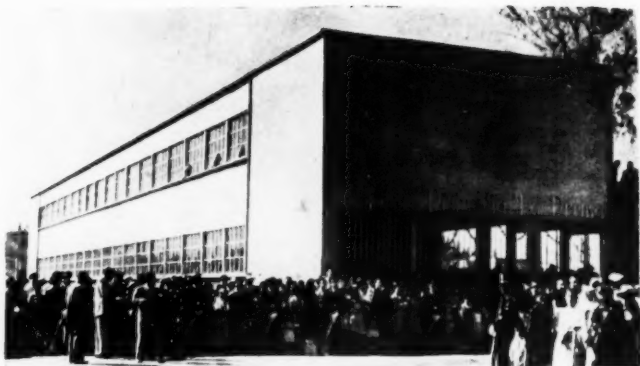
The closing act in the lengthy program of inaugurations took place in Avenida "Gabriel Ramos Millán," which formerly bore the name of "Avenida de las Rosas." This avenue now widened and totally modernized, will greatly facilitate traffic through the southern section of the city by connecting the Calzada de Tlalpan with the Avenida Insurgentes.

Throughout this entire itinerary, many thousands of people gathered along the streets to greet the President in a spontaneous manifestation of gratitude for the constructive effort achieved by his government.



"Orozco y Berra" School on the day of its inauguration

Multitudes greet President Alemán at the inauguration of the school "La Prensa."



The new school "Republica del Ecuador" in the precinct of Mixcoac.

Convents and an Execution

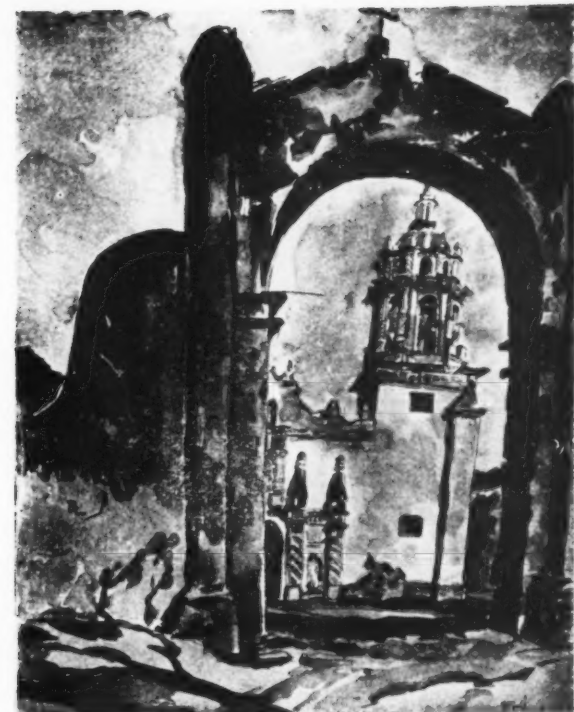
By Hudson Strode

It is interesting to remark the practical modern uses that converted monasteries and nunneries have been put to in Mexico. Hundreds of former ecclesiastical buildings have been transformed variously into hospitals, labor headquarters, libraries, museums, art schools, and military barracks. Because of the war that was raging in the Eastern Hemisphere and the possibility of an attack either by Japan or by Germany, the Mexican Government decreed one year's compulsory military training for all youths of eighteen. While army posts in numerous sectors were being enlarged and modernized, carpenters, masons, plumbers electricians, transformed many vacant convents into living-quarters for the youths in training.

As the Convent of the Cross in Querétaro had been used in Maximilian's day to house first his own troops and then the soldiers of General Escobedo, now another convent in the center of the city has been turned into a barracks for new conscripts. Where the sandals of cloistered nuns once trod lightly on the cool corridor stones, now the roughshod heavy feet of soldier boys made harsh reverberations. We arrived just as a group of trainees came clumping down the stone stairs, with the look of girl quarry in their eyes.

It was Sunday and a day of freedom. The great upper rooms were almost empty. In one room of forty cots, a sole occupant lay immobile on top of his bedclothes, fully dressed, no sign of life except in his flicking eyes. As Esperón went down the aisle, the Indian boy remained as still as in image until the Captain was right at his bed. Then he rose and stood trembling, almost like a trapped animal. Esperón spoke pleasantly to him. The boy nodded and muttered. I came up and spoke. His lips widened slightly but the smile did not quite come. His narrow face, with its small glass-black eyes, was like an ugly bronze mask.

Esperón began talking about his not being out with the others, enjoying the fine weather. At first the boy listened without any sign of agreement or contradiction. His attitude, as he stood upright the way his officers had taught conscripts to stand, was one of humility mingled with painful diffidence. He had



Water Color.

By Ruth Van Sickle Ford.

been in the army four months, he said, with difficulty. He came from a remote mountainous region in Zacatecas. He had never been more than a few kilometers from his home before the conscription order came. The boy was obviously most uncomfortable in this strange new world: his distrust was mirrored in his obsidian eyes. He was beginning to understand Spanish now. As he stood rigid at the foot of his cot, careful not to make an unnecessary gesture, he spoke like a child pronouncing words from a primer, and those hardly more than a guttural whisper.

Captain Esperón was very amiable with the boy. He was careful to give his deep voice the gentlest accents, to inspire confidence. Gradually the frozen fear began to thaw.

"But this training will be splendid for you," Esperón was saying. "You will learn to speak Spanish and to read and write. You will see things to remember always. You will find that there are many good people beyond the mountain rims of your district. You will make new friends before long, and go back to your village much more of a man."

"Sí, señor." A smile hovered at the corner of his lips. But he was afraid to give himself away by loosening it.

"You should be out in the plaza with the crowds, listening to the music."

The boy broke his immobility to point to the region of his heart. "But, señor, I have a little heaviness here."

Esperón smiled understandingly. "It's a longing for home. It will pass in the plaza, I assure you."

The twanging of a musical instrument behind us made us turn. A bright-eyed fellow in undershirt and trousers walked down the rows between the beds, a mandolin cradled in his arm. Out of curiosity, he had wandered in from the next dormitory through the great doorway. He was a well-built, lusty youth, with aggressive black hair and an assured manner. He spoke good Spanish. He turned out to be a native of Esperón's own northern province.

"Why the hell aren't you out this afternoon?"

did white teeth that made his mestizo face even handsomer. The boy grinned philosophically. He had splen-ser. "I have no money. I see a pretty girl and I cannot even buy her an ice-cream cone, so it is no good. I shall save my pay for next Sunday. This Sunday I do penance—and practice my music." He touched off some chords on his mandolin.

Esperón reached into his pocket and gave the chap a two-peso note. "Get out and enjoy yourself." The youth could accept it with casual grace from a compadre.

I gave a two-peso note to the Indian from Zacatecas—to go to a picture show to make the heaviness in his heart pass. He trembled, and swallowed his "Muchas gracias."

We turned again, for there was a third soldier regarding us with quiet interest. He looked like a kid dressed up in his big soldier brother's clothes, and he seemed to be pure white. If there was Indian blood in him, it was not more than an eighth or a sixteenth. With large gray eyes and an innocent little-boy expression, he was what would be called the appealing type.

"What are you doing in the army?" Esperón said, in some amazement.

The boy smiled slowly. Maybe it was a joke, but here he was. "They called me." It was as simple as that.

"How old are you?"

"Eighteen."

"No. You can't be more than fourteen."

"My mother says eighteen."

For all his lamblike expression, there was no homesickness eating at him. His name was Josefat Mendes. He came from near Jauala in Hidalgo. I got him to write his name in my notebook. He had had three years in school. He said he liked the army well enough, and was glad to get some more schooling. He seemed to find life amusing, and he could make out anywhere. He had the aura of a pet that couldn't be spoiled.

"In the Revolution," Esperón said, "they had them as angel-faced and even younger than he looks. Some could just raise their guns, but they shot—and they could kill."

While the other boys were getting ready to go out, I took some pictures of Josefat Mendes with my Leica, on the stairs, against a column, here or there where the light was right. Half-lost in his soldier's outfit, sitting or standing, smiling or grave, he posed with no trace of self-consciousness. He said he did not know his father's profession. His father had disappeared before he was born. His mother had had a hard time. He did not know what occupation he himself would choose. He thought building bridges might be nice, or running an ice-cream shop. But he liked the army for the time being. There was plenty of time to decide.

Josefat Mendes was not as readily communicative as the crippled Manuel Solís at Pátzcuaro, and he did not have the radiance of the younger boy. But somehow he had the same effect of filling one with wishes for his happiness. For all his claim to eighteen years, which we could not believe, he was like a fourteen-year-old you would like to take to the circus or give a pony to. Instead, I gave him some money for the movies and a treat for some of his friends, and told him to study his lessons and write to his mother.

"Well, there's a cross section of our future army," Esperón said as we walked away. "Most likely they'll never get into an actual battle. But this training is fine for them individually, and fine for the nation's morale. As soon as General Cárdenas became Minister of National Defense in the emergency of '41,

he began reforming the army—putting shower baths in barracks, seeing that food was wholesome and well cooked, that the army cots were not uncomfortable, the blankets warm, the youths free of lice, and school lessons heard every day. He made use of the army appropriation to further his educational aims, and to give unfortunates a taste of respectable, if plain, living.

"Here, it's like a boy's boarding school without frills. And they come from every class and condition of society. Many of these chaps never heard Spanish spoken before, never slept anywhere but on the floor. The Indians are excessively parochial. They look upon anyone who doesn't speak their provincial dialect or live within a morning's walk as an enemy. Now they will learn better. They have never known dental care or seen a doctor or heard of a hygienic law. When they go back home they will be able to carry a message of civilization with them. And if they have a spark of ambition, they may find a way up. Who can foretell the flight of a word?"

There was still time before luncheon to trace the last steps of Maximilian. After the capture of the fever-racked Emperor on the morning of May 15, 1867, he was first incarcerated in the Convent of La Cruz. Later he was moved to the Teresita Convent, which has now been transformed into the offices of the Department of Public Health. There Juárez ordered that the sick man be kept in the dank crypt, and that his fare be that of the criminal, bread and water. Either for humane reasons, or because he feared that death would overtake the fallen Prince before he could be tried and shot, the commanding officer disobeyed Juárez's order, and had Maximilian brought up to an upper floor, where the Mexican Generals Miguel Miramón and Tomás Mejía were imprisoned.

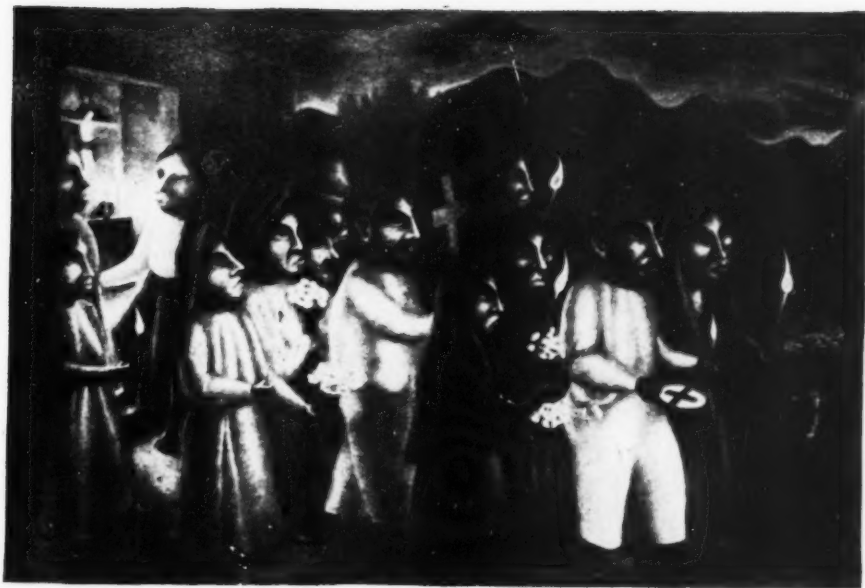
The Emperor was given more palatable food and allowed to have his physician in attendance. But he was too ill to appear in court for his trial. To make up for this cheating of public curiosity, the citizens of Querétaro and all the encamped victorious soldiers were permitted to pass in line through his sick room day after day to stare upon fallen majesty. Maximilian was in such a weakened condition and of so gentle a natural disposition that few of even the most insensitive had the heart to mock. But his helplessness did not prevent the crowds from pilfering all his last meager possessions, except the black suit he was to die in and the gold pieces he saved under his pillow to give the firing squad.

At the Department of Health Building we tried to find the room where Maximilian had spent his last days, half in delirium, dreaming of exile on the Adriatic and recuperation among friends on his yacht. Until his hour actually came, he had hoped world opinion would sway Juárez to clemency, since the crowned heads of Europe had humbled themselves before the Indian to beg for his life.

There was only a charwoman in the building, doing Sunday cleaning. She looked at us with dull resentment at our intrusion. She did not know any Maximilian, she declared. No one that she knew had been kept here until his execution. She waved a hand toward the right and then vaguely toward the left. If what we said was so, it might have been that room or that room. She couldn't see what difference it made now, if the man was already shot. "Seventy years ago?" She stared at us confusedly, and muttered something unintelligible. Then, seizing her bucket of dirty water, she disappeared through a doorway behind a desk, out of range of such a crackbrained pair.

We retired in complete defeat and went out the door by which Maximilian had left for the final scene. He was feeling a little better that morning of June 19.

Continued on page 59



Oil.

By Violetta Swann.

A Party for the Santos

By Herbert Joseph Mangham

THE bells of the San Miguel chapel rang with a sudden urgency. I looked at the calendar and at the slanting rays of the sun, but neither the date nor the time of afternoon could explain the summons. They rang with no hint of letup. So I closed my book and walked over to the church.

Several neighbors hurrying ahead of me glanced over their shoulders to say "Buenas tardes," but did not pause. The general air of excitement roused expectations in me that were somewhat dimmed when I stepped into the church. The interior was disarranged and several people watched while half a dozen men removed the santo to a small platform nailed to two horizontal poles. Delfino, of course, was doing most of the work. Tall, powerful Delfino with his perpetual good nature played trombone in the barrio band and took a place close to the center of all community activities.

What were they doing? I asked. Oh, taking the santo to the templo mayor. (A big church faces the zócalo, or town square, in Tempoztlán and a small one stands in the center of each of the town's seven barrios, or precincts.) And why were they taking the santo to the big church? Oh, for a fiesta. What fiesta—I didn't know of any fiesta? Well, every santo has his own fiesta, so this time they were bringing the santos from all the barrios together in one grand fiesta—sort of a social affair for the santos. Delfino smiled, and gave the word for the final effort which

transferred the santo to the litter. Was I invited to this social affair? "You are an honored guest at all our social affairs," said Delfino, which was politeness.

* * *

Outside the church, four men lifted the santo to their shoulders and began a slow march towards the zócalo. A dozen people fell in behind, most of them carrying lighted candles. The church bell was still ringing, and we could now hear several other bells. I saw Señora García peer out of her door and then dart about inside. A moment later she scurried through her garden with her candle, adjusting her rebozo as she scurried. "Buenas tardes, buenas tardes!" she said to right and to left, then touched her candle to the flame of another woman's candle and suddenly slowed down to a pace suitable to a solemn procession. Others waited to join us at every house we passed. By the time we reached the zócalo we were three dozen. The bells of the great church broke into a welcoming clamor as we rounded the corner.

As San Miguel was the nearest barrio, we were the first to reach the big church; but two other processions soon followed us. Each procession was longer than the preceding, because it had to pass more houses in the distance it covered. Many people, too, went to meet them. The rest of us waited in the church, watching the long, dim shadows swell and fade on

the high stone walls, until, at the sound of distant singing, the children would rush for the door, excitedly whispering, "That must be—," naming the next nearest barrio.

There is nothing in all Mexico more impressive than a religious procession of Indians after dark. All of the people in these longer processions chanted as they walked. The gathering night was moonless. The santo, held high aloft, would appear first at the head of a narrow street opening on the zócalo, looming like a prehistoric figure in the glow from the candles behind. Simultaneously, the church bells pealed a welcome. Gradually the procession emerged upon the zócalo. Then it entered the portals of the churchyard, descended a dozen steps, and marched down the long walk to the church. The people at the door divided to let it through. As it disappeared, they closed behind it and followed into the church to watch the santo being lifted into place.

* * *

When the seventh santo had been put in its niche, Estanislao remarked that he would run home and eat his frijoles now, before meeting the procession from Ixatepec. This was news to me. Estanislao explained that not only the santo from Ixatepec, a village a mile to the east, but also the one from Santiago, half a mile further, was coming. The people from the nearer town would wait for the others and join them in one procession. I hastened home for my own beans and then returned to the hilltop where the road led out to the east.

A group of people already waited there. The valley below and the craggy mountains on each side were dimly outlined in the starlight. On our left the great walls of the church, crenelated to serve as battlements, and its tall twin bell-towers bulked more hugely than the mountains. In the distance a golden shimmer hovered like a phosphorescence over the road. Gradually it took the shape of a procession. One by one the townspeople glided past us down the hill and disappeared into the darkness of the valley. Now an occasional breeze brought us a wisp of song, like something rather dreamed than heard.

Mingel touched me in invitation, and I walked with him down the hill. Sometimes a rise or a clump of trees hid the procession, but the singing now came in a continuous, though faint, line. When we emerged on a hummock, we could see the procession clearly on a level stretch ahead of us, the santo from Santiago at the head, followed by a couple hundred people in two close lines, and then the santo from Ixatepec, followed by another couple hundred people. Every minute more villagers materialized out of the darkness, lit their candles, and slipped into the lines. When the soft light of the procession finally reached us, the trees on each side of the road seemed to rise and bow. The fields slipped away into the shadow. The mountains were only a jagged line against the sky. Beyond the mountains was nothing.

A voice behind me whispered, "Don Heriberto!" The prominent eyes of Estanislao reflected the candle light. "How tall did you say that building in Nuevo York was?"

* * *

"The Empire State?" I recounted the approximate statistics. He turned to nod to two friends. They res-

pounded with the usual Tepoxtecan appreciation of an amazing story, a long, low whistle emitted through the teeth. Then I had to retell the Battle of the Coral Sea. That was usually the favorite war story. It was more easily comprehended than the atomic bomb; the title pleased them and the relative Japanese casualties drew many appreciative whistles.

"How much do you make?" This question was no great surprise. These people discuss their personal affairs with complete frankness, so one grows accustomed to inquiries about one's love life and other intimate affairs. I knew that most of them earned two or three pesos a day. I wanted to sustain my own and my country's honor, but I did not want to startle them or strain their credulity. So after a second's rapid calculation I answered, "Fifty dollars month." This drew a long, long whistle. As I looked at the creeping procession and the dusk beyond, in which there was neither nearness nor distance, I wondered if they could believe me. I felt incredulous myself of the Empire State, the great sea battles, and even the fifty dollars.

As we climbed the hill into town, the fortress-like church at the summit restored a sense of substance and time. It was after ten o'clock. When I approached the church door, a sign leaped out at me in the candle light. Protestantism was on the march in Mexico, it warned; everybody should confirm his faith by following certain recommendations without procrastination and thus escape the blight. I skulked in the shadows in the best movie criminal tradition. But as I listened at the back of the church to the mass, a smile here and a touch there assured me that I wasn't quite a pariah.

* * *

The farewells took place on an afternoon the following week. The nine santos were brought out into the great rectangular churchyard. With a double line of people spacing them, the procession reached from the church door to the gate. It moved slowly round and round the yard. Señor Mondragon was constantly recruiting men to replace those who bore the santos on their shoulders. Once he asked me, but, being neither Catholic nor Indian, I was embarrassed and grasped at the first excuse that offered. I was too tall, I explained; I would tilt the santo too much. But the next time around, I happened to be talking to Ambrosio, one of the three men in the population of 4,000 who could match my five feet ten inches. My excuse was gone. When Ambrosio and I took up the front ends of the poles, the news telegraphed along the line—the Americano was taking part in the procession! Dark eyes turned for a glance. Ambrosio and I smiled at each other. From now on we were amigos of the first water; we would go to fiestas and to the swimming hole together; we would have a special smile and handclasp when we met in the market place.

* * *

I was the most conspicuous figure in the procession with my blue slack suit, brown hair, blue eyes, and sun-broiled fair complexion. As we passed the gate, a group of errant tourists descended the steps from the street. One of them nudged her companion and nodded discreetly in my direction. "Lookut!" she said, with an expression of intelligence. "Betcha he's part white!"



Hamlet in Yucatán. Lithograph.

By Francisco Dosamantes.

Francisco Dosamantes

By Guillermo Rivas

AMID the group of painters who followed in the wake of the mural era, and who are usually referred to as "the younger modern generation," only a counted few have remained entirely true to the aesthetic and social precepts of that era. This, I suppose, is the way it should be, for nearly three decades have passed since the men who initiated this magnificent period in Mexican art have painted their first murals and life in Mexico and in the outside world has undergone many upheavals and changes, which have exerted their inevitable influence on art.

And yet, the fundamental creed of this era, that art, beyond its primary function of the artist's personal creative fulfillment must serve a social function—that art should be popular in the exact sense of the word; that it should not be the possession of the privileged few, but should be created for the joy and edification of the many; that springing from the people it should revert to the people—is still basically sound. Indeed, for a country like Mexico, which is still in the throes of a vast social transformation, an artistic creed of this kind still has its obvious validity.

The gradual decline of this creed has been largely due to practical reasons—to the fact that in more recent years public walls have not been as readily available to our painters as they have been at the outset. Thus our socially-minded painters, being compelled to express themselves at the easel, in the need to earn a livelihood, have been also compelled to yield to public taste, to meet the exigencies of the market. As result, the work most of them are turning out today, though preserving in its outward aspects an influence of the mural era, lacks its vital significance, and is therefore essentially decorative.

* * *

Francisco Dosamantes, who drew his initial inspiration and guidance from the mural masters, defines a notable exception. His work has preserved its vitality because he has remained steadfast in his aesthetic convictions. Since his first public exhibit some twenty years ago, his art undergoing continual technical improvement, steadily gaining in assurance and clarity of utterance, has never deviated from his primary creed. Without ever descending to pictorial pamph-



Lithograph By Francisco Dosamantes. From the series "Women of Yucatán."

leteering, without ever belittling his art by banal proselytizing, he has always imbued it with an implicit note of social significance. His excellent paintings might be adorning sundry, even commonplace, walls, (for no artist can choose his public), but they were never intended to be a mere adornment.

These paintings, beyond their plastic excellence, express a definite viewpoint and voice a message. And usually it is a disturbing message—an intruding reminder that not everything in life is pretty, and that an artist who happens to have a rare endowment for it can achieve the aesthetic paradox of creating works of beauty through the depiction of ugliness.

We find this paradox impressively brought out in the fine series of lithographs which are currently being exhibited at the Galeria Arte Moderno. Titled "Functional Architectuer," these lithographs project the evolution of native architecture from the cave-dwelling stage to that of the modern skyscraper. In a beautifully composed linear structure and tenuous chiaroscuro the artist develops the theme of city housing, revealing each phase, like a geological stratification, from the bottom up, presenting a mordant synthesis of the city's amorphous growth. It is an impressive folio: a stark projection of a social thesis, a caustic commentary. It is, moreover, a work of fine art whose puissance stems from its profound humanity.

"Shanties in the Outskirts."

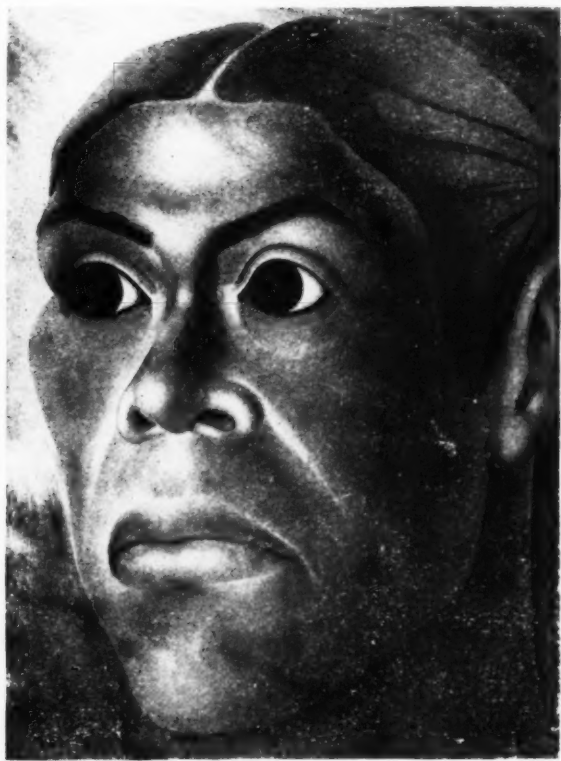
Lithograph. By Francisco Dosamantes.





Lithograph. From the "Functional Architecture" series.

By Francisco Dosamantes.

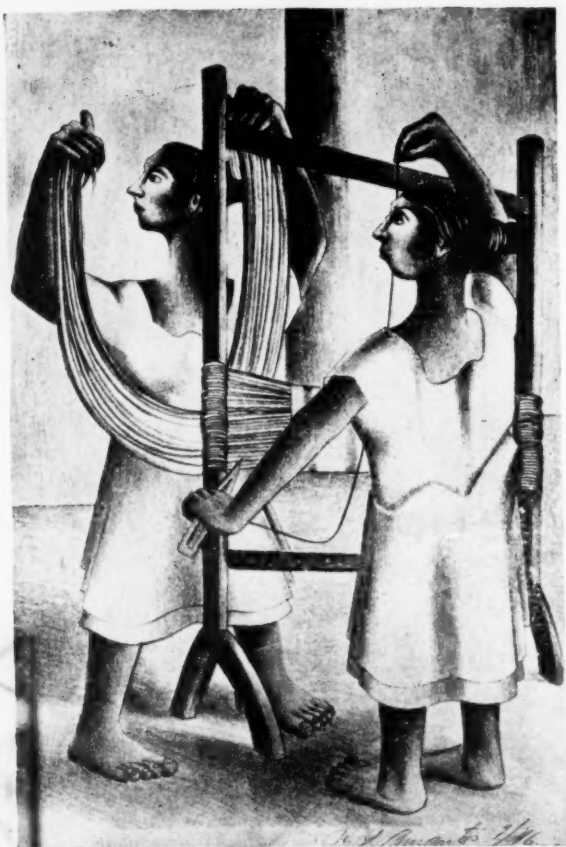


"Maria Guadalupe." Oil.

By Francisco Dosamantes.

Lithograph. From the series, "Women of Yucatán" By Francisco Dosamantes.





Lithographs. By Francisco Dosamantes.
From the series "Women of Yucatán."

Un Poco de Todo

EXPERIMENTERS WITH ALGAE

THE once discredited Malthusian doctrine that the world's population is increasing more rapidly than its food supply has been revived in recent years with the result that statisticians and scientists shudder as they look into the future and behold much of humanity in the clutch of starvation. Whether or not the Carnegie Institution of Washington, D. C., is to be numbered among the shudders, it let it be known last month through one of its grantees, Arthur D. Little, Inc., of Cambridge, Mass., what is it doing to solve the problem with the aid of algae. Carnegie is supporting similar projects elsewhere, but about these nothing was said last month. It is the purpose of this article to survey all.

Why have algae been chosen for experimentation? Because they are nutritious, prolific and simple plants. They grow on the surfaces of ponds and lakes and in the sea as seaweed. They are a source not only of food but of fats, of drying oils that can be used in paints and varnishes and of organic materials from which a substitute for wool can be made.

There is a catch in this effort. It is this: A pond will produce only one pound of algae per 100,000 gallons of water. The problem is to increase production of water. When production is stepped up on a laboratory scale, another difficulty is encountered. It turns out that, just as in the case of flies grown in an empty milk bottle or of animals that propagate in a limited space, a too-dense crop of algae will choke itself to death. Lesser difficulties are proper nutrition and illumination.

The chorella species of algae is the one that has been selected for propagation by Carnegie Institution grantees. It is a species that can multiply to seven times its volume in a single day under proper conditions. One investigator finds that theoretically 55,000 pounds of protein could be harvested in a single acre of algae. The best that can be expected from soybeans, about the most productive agricultural crop known, is an annual output of 880 pounds an acre.

The lakes in which chorella algae grow have large surfaces. Carnegie grantees all try to outdo nature by devising apparatus—"farms," they may be called—which will provide the largest possible surface in the smallest possible space.

Dr. Jack E. Myers, one of the Carnegie grantees, grows chorella in a water solution in a quarter-inch space between two glass tubes, one inside the other. The outside tube is three inches in diameter and approximately three feet high. Carbon dioxide gas—the kind with which beer and ginger ale are charged—passes through the solution, and this, with sunlight and some essential minerals, brings about extraordinary growth.

Though he is producing half a pound of algae per gallon of water, Dr. Myers sees no bright financial future for chorella soup or hash, yet he believes chorella may be profitably cultivated as a source of drying oils and of fats.

Two problems have always vexed experimental algae growers. One is the high concentration of plant in thin layers; the other the controlled introduction of needed minerals. The algae must have iron, for example, but the addition of too much at a time poisons. Dr. Myers overcomes this difficulty with the aid of *versene*, a chemical used in kitchen soap to produce suds in hard water. *Versene* acts as an automatic con-

trol station by allowing only a minute amount of minerals to participate in the growth of algae.

Paul M. Cook of the Stanford Research Institute experimented with algae for the Carnegie Institution of Washington and the Research Corporation of New York City. Though no longer a Carnegie grantee, he still lectures and writes on algae. He finds that by changing the environmental conditions under which algae are grown remarkable results can be obtained. Thus normal, rapidly growing cells of chorella algae consist of more than 50 per cent protein, but if the concentration of nitrogen (principal constituent of protein) is reduced in the culture medium the fat content can be raised to more than 85 per cent, which is just what the industrial maker of oils and greases wants.

Cook has devised a culture system with a continuous supply of nutrient. A pyrex-glass column four inches in diameter and six feet high is flooded with light from three 100-watt fluorescent lamps. Constant temperature is maintained. Air bubbles up through an inlet tube at the bottom of the column. Two other tubes are sealed into the column near the bottom, one to introduce fresh culture medium, the other to permit the taking of samples. When chorella reproduces too rapidly some of the culture medium overflows. Fresh medium is then introduced. The overflow is collected and the algae sifted out and dried. The protein product obtained is used in feeding experiments. A crop is harvested every day.

Like others, Cook finds it difficult to grow a large crop of chorella and at the same time prevent it from killing itself when overproduction sets in. Hence he and other explorers of the field have not been able to get more than one three-hundredths of an ounce of chorella, dry weight, for each quart of medium. Like Myers, he sees here a stumbling block that must be removed if large-scale algae-farming is to be economically feasible.

Cook has also been working outdoors with sunlight instead of artificial light. He has designed, but not built, what he believes to be a feasible large-scale culture process. In his design the process is divided into two stages. There is a "farm" for the cultivation of algae, and a plant for processing the crop. The farm is a series of long horizontal tanks. As Cook sees it, such tank farms may yet dot the desert areas of the sunny Southwest.

The only pilot plant so far in operation for the cultivation of chorella is that of Arthur D. Little, Inc. With this Dr. Austin W. Risher is studying what may be roughly termed the economics of algae farming. The plant has a total growing area of 1,200 feet. In one unit a suspension of chorella is exposed to sunlight and continuously pumped through a large transparent plastic tubular channel; in a second unit the suspension is circulated in a trough beneath a transparent plastic cover. Growth is continuous. A crop is harvested every day as in other Carnegie projects.

There are many species of algae. So far only one has been the subject of experimentation. It may be that other species may be worth more attention. For this reason the Carnegie Institution has made a grant to Dr. Robert W. Krauss, botanist of the University of Maryland, to explore the field. If he turns up anything that looks commercially good it will be cultivated and otherwise tested in the pilot plant of Arthur D. Little, Inc.

Continued on page 43

Literary Appraisals

ARIE ANTIGUO DE MEXICO, by Paul Westheim. Translated from the German by Mariana Frank. Mexico City, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1950. 356 p. Illus. 35 Mexican pesos.

FOR MORE THAN twenty-five years, Wilhelm Worringer's ideas have been familiar to Spanish-speaking people interested in esthetic. Early fragments of his work appeared in Madrid's "Revista de Occidente" a quarter century ago. A little later the same magazine's publishing house offered us the complete volumes on Gothic and Egyptian art in which the German thinker developed his theories, introducing a novel psychological interpretation at a time when the dominant tendency was one of formalism.

Now another German, a disciple of Worringer, uses his master's system to investigate the vast, unexplored field of ancient Mexican art. Of course, we cannot overlook the excellent research previously done by Eulalia Guzmán, Salvador Toseano, George Vailant, Alfonso Caso, and others in and out of Mexico who have worked to bring order to the subject of the esthetics of the great cultures bloomed on Mexican soil.

But this new and vital contribution to these studies, Paul Westheim's book "Arte Antiguo de México" (Ancient Art of Mexico), fulfills its function with responsibility and dignity, opening new horizons to future scholars. The author often draws upon his predecessors in the field. The result is an extensive, perfectly organized work, very clearly written. Treating archeological problems incidentally and descriptively, it introduces us to the field of esthetics, never losing track of the author's chief aim. It is a difficult achievement in dealing with cultures in which much still remains to be explained.

This quality of intellectual adventure resulting from the author's intuition and serene thought invests the work with a special charm and gives the reader an intimate understanding of the intangible world it describes. Westheim's theories may be accepted, modified, or refuted, but they cannot be ignored. These ideas, always supported by careful consideration of the works of art, are expressed in a way that invites thought and suggests possibilities for developing and even correcting the author's own views. His teacher Worringer asserted that "the base on which historical knowledge rests is always our own ego, with the conditions and limitations of our time. However much we strive to master a certain apparent objectivity, we can never manage to strip off the essential assumptions that are the foundation of our present thinking and feeling."

Accepting this premise of temporariness—inevitable with a work of this kind—as a principle of the author's philosophy, we must at the same time admit that no work of its caliber on the subject has appeared since Salvador Toseano's memorable "Arte Precolombiano de México y de la América Central" (Mexico City, Universidad Autónoma de México, 1944).

After years of detailed study, Westheim considers the esthetics of the ancient Mexicans only as an expression of their respective religions. Serving a magic or mystic cause, the plastic arts were conditioned by complex hierarchies of gods. Esthetics was regarded as at the service of something else. Denying the principle of art for art's sake, these concepts strengthen the thesis that there is perfect continuity in the artis-

tic expression of the Mexican people down to the present day, when we analyze the survival of this "utilitarian" principle through the country's whole artistic tradition.

In other words, starting from Westheim's description of pre-Columbian art in Mexico as "the work of priests, and work that was closely prescribed," we have a line of thought that helps us explain, in principle, the wealth of Christian art during the colonial period, and the outstanding products of the mural painters in our own day. Mexican art from the beginning has been an art of ideas, or at the service of ideas. Following the magic and ritual of popular arts, we can establish an unbroken line of succession from the Aztec Coatlicue to the terrible, though universal, vision of man Orozco left in his best frescoes.

In Mexico's pre-Columbian art, Westheim tells us, "cult ritual determined the outlets for the creative personality. Thus, portraiture was ignored and all art was inspired only by a symbolic concept." Getting at the essence of its expression, the author states that "the contemplative conception of nature is unknown in pre-Columbian art."

Westheim contrasts the primitive Mexican's total concept of knowledge with the Western artist's concept, finding in the latter a pre-eminently sensory, optical system of perception. "When the artisan of ancient Mexico drew a tree," Westheim tells us, "he represented the trunk, the flowers, and the root. The root almost always has the form of a serpent's mouth or an eagle's beak, with which the trunk clings, one could say, to the body of the earth. The root is never missing. It is the characteristic, decisive element. The pre-Columbian man's representation of the tree is not complete without the sign of the root; without that, for him it would be only a stick decorated with flowers. Western civilization's artist draws the trunk, the top, the branches, the foliage, sometimes with flowers. He relies on what is optically perceptible. The root lies below the surface of the soil, therefore he does not represent it."

Westheim contrasts the unlimited scope of a total knowledge, like that of the primitive Mexicans which has been able to survive and maintain fresh currents, with the conventional conceptions of Western art, limited and subordinated to the surrounding reality. Thus he helps give us hope for the future of those aspects of contemporary art, like the movements deriving from cubism, which want to play a more penetrating and significant role.

When he judges the pre-Columbian creators, Westheim approaches the much-debated problem of the abstract and the concrete from a sound point of view. His opinion again favors the postulates of the new art, perhaps unintentionally, when he shows that the ancient Mexicans did not recognize differences between the real and the unreal, because such boundaries could not be drawn in art that had a transcendental function. Westheim states that "what our theory of art calls 'close to nature' refers only to one mode of creating, which corresponds to the optical convention of our times." A convention, we could add, that has been going through crisis since the appearance of Cézanne.

In this volume we have a concise but exhaustive study of the characteristics and manifestations of art in Mexico's major cultures. The prehistoric artisans, the Mayas, the Teotihuacanos, the Zapotecs, the Aztecs,

as creators. In this extraordinary book the text, in a fluid and excellent translation that does not read like one, is accompanied by magnificent reproductions.

J. G. S.

TIME AND THE WIND. By Erico Verissimo. Translated by L. L. Barrett. 624 pp. New York: The Macmillan Company.

THE fourth of Erico Verissimo's novels to be published in the United States, "Time and the Wind" ought to be by all odds his most popular book, for it is as lively and colorful as any swashbuckling historical romance that has ever appeared on the best-seller lists. At the same time it avoids the stereotypes and improbabilities of the genre, and is marked by a deep feeling for the mystery of human existence.

The scene is the Brazilian province in which Verissimo was born, Rio Grande do Sul, and the Santa Fé of the novel may well be his native Cruz Alta. In one of its elements the book is an account of the siege of Santa Fé's finest mansion, the Sobrado in the federalist-republican wars of 1895. The brief chapters laid in the Sobrado, however, alternate with longer narrative passages that begin in 1745 and move forward to the year of the siege.

The Sobrado chapters center in Licurgo Cambara, the republican owner of the mansion, who refuses to surrender although food is exhausted and water obtainable only at the risk of life, although his wife is in childbirth and some of the besieged are dying. Ar-

dent as he is in his adherence to the republic, Licurgo is motivated less by political conviction than by family pride and hatred of the Amarals, his family's traditional enemies. The republican army comes in time, but barely in time.

The interspersed narratives portray some of Licurgo's ancestors, beginning with Pedro, who was born in 1745 of an Indian mother and an unknown white father and was brought up by a priest. Another Pedro, illegitimate son of this Pedro and a pioneer woman, was taken to Santa Fé by his mother after her family had been wiped out by bandits. Bibania, daughter of the second Pedro, Pedro Terra, married a gallant but irresponsible soldier, Rodrigo Cambara, who died in fighting the Amarals, the city's petty dictators.

When Aguinaldo Silva, a usurer from the north, built the Sobrado on land from which he had dispossessed the Terras, Bibania schemed to marry her son Bolivar to Silva's grand-daughter, the beautiful and sadistic Luzia. And after Bolivar has died—like his father at the hands of the Amarals' henchmen—she struggles with her daughter-in-law for control of Bolivar's son. This son grows up to become the Licurgo of the Sobrado siege, and thus the novel sweeps back to its starting point.

The southernmost province of Brazil is remote from the United States in more than miles, and yet "Time and the Wind," in spite of a multitude of unfamiliar details, never seems really strange to a North American reader. The explanation is, of course, that the frontier Verissimo writes about is fundamentally



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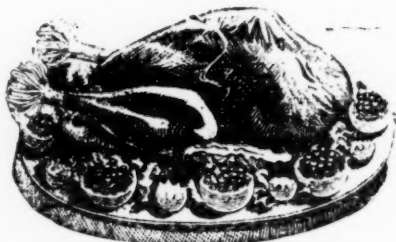
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similar to our frontier, about which we have all read so much. His frontier, however, lasted for a century and a half, producing many generations of bold, hard, belligerent men and patient, resourceful women. That is the theme of his novel—the persistence of a desperate but heroic way of life—and he has written about it not only vividly but thoughtfully as well.

G. H.

QUEST FOR THE LOST CITY. By Dana and Ginger Lamb. Illustrated with photographs by the authors. 340 pp. New York: Harper & Bros

THE authors of this book are a team of amateur adventurers whose first book "Enchanted Vagabonds" was published several years ago. Now they are back with an account of a 2,000-mile safari down the extremely rugged west coast of Mexico to Chiapas, where in the insect-dripping rain forests of that state (a section that was a blank on the maps) they spent several months seeking the relics of an ancient Mayan settlement.

By walking and by painstakingly avoiding roads and other marks of civilization, the trip to the site alone took two years. Just to make it difficult, they started with \$10.16, which they spent almost immediately. They carried what they needed (100 pounds between them), and existed on small game, wild fruits, the iguana ("I feel as if we're eating dragon, but it tastes an awful lot like chicken") and tuberous roots.

When malaria struck, they sweated it out with quinine and herbal tea in a thatched hut. When they came to rivers, they laboriously built rafts to ferry them across. The precipitous slopes of the famed Nayarit gorges might take a full day to descend, a full day to ascend again. For the terrors of unexplored jungle, whose human denizens were unknown and unpredictable, they were armed only with 22 pistols and machetes. The tropic forests brought sleeping in trees, days at a time when they survived on the bejuco de agua or water-vine, and a long period of living with the descendants of a "lost" branch of the Mayas.

"Quest for the Lost City" is an absorbing book—a sort of overland "Kon-Tiki"—marred chiefly by an ingenuous style. If the Lambs are not story-tellers, they do have a story to tell.

R. C. L.

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A VIOLENT INNOCENCE. By Alice-Leone Moats. 312 pages. Duell, Sloan & Pearce, New York.

THE first recorded impression in her memory was of the great earthquake which marked the victorious arrival of the revolutionary leader, Madero, in Mexico City. With the deposal of the great dictator, Don Porfirio Díaz, the era of revolutions began in Mexico. "My parents never missed a single (one); I missed very few," writes Miss Moats. Her Violent Innocence included the Ten Tragic Days of Mexico City... Vera Cruz, when the Marines landed... a refugee's flight to New Orleans by boat... Pancho Villa's bid for power... the killing of her French teacher by her professor of German. Childhood remembrances of such turbulent times are mixed in with a good bit of personal family history, and the whole is as interesting a biography, and as anecdotal a one, as you can find. It seems Miss Moats began her reporting in the cradle.

D. L. N.

CINDERELLA OF EUROPE: Spain Explained. By Sheila M. O'Callaghan. Illustrated. 199 pp New York: Philosophical Library.

IN "Cinderella of Europe" Sheila O'Callaghan offers a panegyric of the Franco regime in Spain. Unfortunately she does little to prove that the "focal inspiration of the laws in contemporary Spain is the Christian doctrine that man is the bearer of eternal values." This is a pity, for she has traveled much in Spain, since first she went there in 1931. Then she stayed with "a typically well-to-do middle-class family," where the mother never tired of weeping as she described the panic of the people when they realized, days after the event, that they no longer "had a King, a Queen, infantes, or infantas."

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She has some interesting observations to make on conditions today. Though there is much grumbling among the middle classes, "a good time is had by most of them; the hardest time is had by those who live on the land." In discussing the rationing scheme, she notes that, "having bought all that one is allowed on the ration, there is nothing to prevent anyone from going into the shop next door and buying more of the same foods at higher prices." She assures her readers, "the Spanish rationing system aims only at the protection of the poor."

The manual worker's ration is 300 grams a day; other workers get 200. A hungry child could easily eat that much at one meal, she says. However, fancy bread and buns are unrationed. On one occasion she bought several samples to feed an emaciated dog, while "a most importunate beggar appeared; *** letting me know he strongly disapproved my attentions to the dog. I turned away in disgust. At that moment I had no sympathy whatever for the man."

Her general thesis—"people's appreciation of democratic freedom is dim; what they want is economic security and material prosperity *** narrow self-interest is the sole motive of the worker's participation in politics"—surely has rather a Marxist than a Christian ring.

She gives many details of the charitable institutions inaugurated and maintained by the present Government in Spain, but seems unaware that, as St. Augustine first said, charity cannot take the place of justice withheld.

With her view of the United Nations as "a hysterically autocratic colossus of world democracy paralyzed by the twisted coils of its own regulations," Gromyko would certainly agree—and perhaps also General Franco.

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Current Attractions

CORONA DE SOMBRA

By Vane C. Dalton

TWO MONTHS ago I commented in this space on the very strange fate met by Salvador Novo's excellent play "La Culta Dama," which had to be suspended at the height of its popularity because the Palacio de Bellas Artes was obliged by previous commitment to make room for another attraction. Now, Rodolfo Usigli's "Corona de Sombra," ("Crown of Shadow"), a play of outstanding merit that was just beginning to attract a large and appreciative attendance, has met with a similar fate. After a fortnight's successful run—a period which usually decides a play's possibilities—it was suspended because the theatre was no longer available.

The situation, to say the least, is incongruous. After years of doldrums, now that our public is actually commencing to evince a newborn interest in the dramatic stage, its chances are being drastically curtailed by the lack of playhouses. With the Palacio de Bellas Artes providing in this city the only adequate stage for dramatic attractions, or, for that matter, the only adequate stage for opera, ballet, symphony or any other kind of attraction, and being therefore utilized by all of them, our dramatic theatre is indeed confronted by an extremely unfavorable situation. It is evident that, as an officially maintained cultural institution, the Palacio de Bellas Artes must distribute its time among all the sundry desirable attractions in order to provide utmost variety and to please the largest and most heterogeneous number of spectators. But in adhering to this policy it is compelled to set a fixed limit on the duration of any given spectacle, regardless of public demand, simply following a schedule of alternating spectacles of different type from night to night. In this manner, its week's billboard might list a dramatic play, a symphony concert, a dance recital, and a political rally. And this system obviously makes a sustained long run of a play impossible.

Considering this handicap, it is a source of wonder to me that our theatrical producers are willing to invest their time, effort and money in staging a play

at the Bellas Artes, knowing beforehand that even if it meets with commensurate public support it will be denied the chance of a long run. Unfortunately, however, at least until such time as the two playhouses now under construction—the Virginia Fabregas and Hidalgo—are completed, our theatrical producers have no choice. It is either the Bellas Artes or nothing at all.

Facing this quite adverse prospect, the Teatro de la Reforma company has been disposed nevertheless to produce Usigli's "Corona de Sombra," calculating, I suppose, on the possibility of a future return engagement. And although it was denied the opportunity of a fitting economic reward, it reaped an ample reward artistically. This play has undeniably further enlarged the prestige of Rodolfo Usigli as author and of Seki Sano as director.

In many respects "La Corona de Sombra" can be regarded as Usigli's outstanding play. Totally unlike all his previous work, it is undoubtedly the most ambitious, and probably the most difficult, play he has presented to date. Departing from his usual realistic

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projections of contemporary life, Usigli chose on this occasion a historical theme—the tragic story of Emperor Maximilian's reign in Mexico—and in choosing this theme he has set for himself a very complex and arduous task.

For while history is often successfully employed as material for drama, it inevitably presents a knotty problem. In undertaking a historical play the author may either strictly adhere to fact, or he may create a fictionalized version. In both cases he finds himself confronted by a difficult problem. He cannot create theatrical art through mere transcription of history, nor can he take liberties with historical facts in order to contrive an entertaining play. Hence he must be able to solve his problem by way of humanizing historical facts, by achieving a psychological interpretation of the leading characters, and by bringing out in dramatic form the implicit significance of commonly known events.

And this is what Usigli achieved in "La Corona de Sombra." Save for some indispensable fictional minutiae, he has not deviated from historical facts, striving to project in his protagonists, Maximilian and Carlotta, their underlying human substance. As the helpless, pathetic victims of an irrational, ill-omened scheme, they are historically authentic. As the frail, erring, vain, ambitious, even kind and misguided idealistic human beings, they are real and convincing.

To this extent Usigli fully coped with his problem. He has also successfully managed the problem of developing his theme through a fluid and consistent sequence of episodes—images emerging in the mind of the demented Carlotta during a lucid spell on the eve of her death. His undertaking, however, involves a yet another problem, a less tangible though quite practical problem which an author must solve in or-



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der to score a final success, and that is to make his play appealing to the audience by arousing a sense of sympathy for his characters. And in this case, the problem confronted by the author poses a veritable challenge. For while the characters of Maximilian and Carlotta, as delineated by Usigli, should readily enlist such sympathy among an audience of open-minded and impartial spectators, one could hardly expect such reaction from a Mexican audience, guided as it is by traditional bias and an ingrained sense of antipathy. No matter how they are pictured, in the average Mexican mind Maximilian and Carlotta are evil and unlikable characters.

I suppose that in undertaking this play Usigli was fully cognizant of this problem; though I am sure that he was not greatly preoccupied by it. As in everything else he has written he has revealed once more his unflagging creative honesty, following his own independent viewpoint, hoping that at best it might coincide with that of his audience.

It is necessary to mention that Usigli wrote this play several years ago and that it was initially presented in its original version (the present has been modified by Seki Sano) at the Teatro Arben. It was subsequently presented in French translation in Brussels, at the Théâtre National de Belgique, and in other Belgian cities, and was accorded a warm reception.

Thus, backed by international prestige, excellently enacted and impeccably staged, "La Corona de Sombra," as presented at the Bellas Artes would have undoubtedly enjoyed a long and prosperous run had this one and only playhouse in the city been available for an indefinite period. As is, it achieved but an impressive introduction which we hope will be followed by a sustained presentation at some future date.

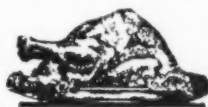


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Art and Personal Notes

PAINTINGS from the private collection of Frederick W. Davis comprise the quite unusual current exhibition at the Galeria de Arte Mexicano (Calle de Milan No. 18). Forming part of the largest and finest collection of its kind in Mexico, the exhibition consists of two sections—religious paintings by 17th and 18th century artists, and popular paintings by 19th century artists.

The present exhibition will be followed by various others to be given in the coming months, which will comprise the total Davis collection. The owner, a long-time resident in Mexico and a distinguished authority on Mexican arts and crafts, has been accumulating these art works through a period of many years, and has recently decided to dispose of them.

A NEW art exhibit gallery, Galeria de Arte Contemporaneo (Calle de Ambarces No. 12), has initiated its activities this month with a group exhibit of works by Agustín Lazo, Antonio Ruiz, Rodríguez Lozano, Rufino Tamayo, Carlos Orozco Romero, Guerrero Galván, Federico Cantú, Ignacio Aguirre and Pablo O'Higgins.

In addition to the paintings, most of which belong to the earlier periods of these contemporary artists' careers, the opening show includes sculptures by Luis Ortiz Monasterio, Arenas Betancourt, German Cueto, Francisco Marin and Ignacio Asunsolo.

S ALON de la Plastica Mexicana (Calle de Puebla 154) is presenting at this time a quite impressive group of still life paintings by Gustavo Montoya, a gifted Mexican artist of the younger contemporary group.

C LARDECOR Gallery (Paseo de la Reforma No. 226) is currently presenting an interesting group of abstract sculptures by German Cueto.

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THE excellent story, by Karena Shields, "Encarnación Who Wanted Nothing," which appears in this issue, will form part of a volume of twelve stories, dealing entirely with Mexican and Central American themes, to be published early next year by Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York.

THE Mexican-North American Cultural Institute (Avenida Yucatán No. 63) offered during the foregoing month an exposition of paintings by James Pinto, an American artist who has been working in Mexico during the past several years. Drawing for his subject matter on Mexican motives, Pinto, a resourceful colorist, expresses himself in semi-abstract terms.

ANOTHER American artist whose work was exhibited here during the past month, is Mark Luca, who is working in Mexico under a graduate fellowship given by the United States-Mexican Commission on Cultural Cooperation. Paintings in various mediums and several sculptures in wire made up his exhibit at the Librería Juárez Galleries (Avenida Juárez No. 102).

FOLLOWING the excellent exposition of landscapes by Armando García Nuñez, the Círculo de Bellas Artes (Avenida Juárez No. 58) is presenting a one-man show of paintings in oil by "Marino" Hoffmann. Including a total of 165 works—many of which are of miniature dimensions—this exhibit is more notable for its volume than quality.

PAINTINGS and brush drawings by Juan De Negri made up last month's show at the Galería Arte Moderno (Plaza Santos Degollado No. 16-C). Although

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De Negri is Mexican by birth, probably because he has lived a large part of his life abroad his paintings, Expressionist in manner, reveal no traces of contemporary native influence.

PRINTS by the distinguished 19th century Yucatecan engraver, Gabriel Vicente Gahona, may be seen during this month at the Centro de Arte Mexicano Contemporaneo (Republica de Cuba No. 75).

A COLLECTION of paintings and drawings by Manuel Aguilar Flores is being exhibited at the Casino del Estado de Veracruz (Corner Havre and Marsella).

THE National Institute of Fine Arts is sponsoring an exhibition of paintings by the Danish Expressionist Jens Nielsen, at the Galeria Cervantes (Corner Heroes and Esmeralda).

LANDSCAPES of Mexico in water color by Manuel Vergara comprised last month's exhibit at the Galerías Romano (José María Marroquí No. 5).

Un Poco de Todo . . .

Continued from page 31

MINDS AND MOONS

The word "lunatic" indicates how our ancestors thought about the danger they risked if they slept in moonlight. If Dr. Leonard J. Ravitz, psychiatrist of Duke University, is right, there may be more to this outmoded belief than we think. He told the Southern Medical Association last month that emotional disturbances can be measured electrically and that they coincide with "cosmic events."

Scientists have long known that each of us, like a radio set, generates electrical waves. Dr. Ravitz has been measuring these "electrical potentials" in insane and normal persons for two years. By plotting the day-by-day results, he discovered changes that co-



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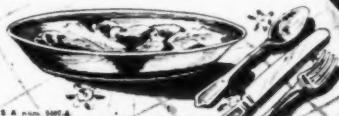
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incide not only with phases of the sun and moon, but with the seasons.

"This doesn't mean," Dr. Ravitz says, "that we can diagnose insanity, but it does mean that we can diagnose the changing degrees of mental disturbance." He finds that there is more unrest in the psychiatric wards of Duke Hospital and the Veterans Hospital, Roanoke, Va., during periods of the new or full moons than at other periods. According to Dr. Ravitz, psychotics (lunatic to us) are more emotionally disturbed during the phases of the new or full moons and in spring or winter than at other times. He measured one patient for five months and on the basis of the measurements mathematically predicted his behavior for the rest of the year. The prediction stood up.

With psychotics, readings are consistently higher than in normal persons, Dr. Ravitz said. However, since normal and abnormal respond to the same "field" influences, readings of both follow the same pattern and the same cycles.

Skeptical mathematicians will scrutinize Dr. Ravitz' argument mercilessly. The sun, moon and the stars in their courses have been held responsible for wars, plagues, earthquakes and cataclysms in general as well as for lunacy.

SEEING MORE IN TENTH OF A SECOND

How much can you see in a tenth of a second?

Some amazing answers to this question have turned up at the University of Wisconsin, one of two centers where the so-called flash-training of artists, journalists, photographers and others who lean heavily upon visual perception in their work is studied. One answer is: "More than you think—if you have the proper training."

Flash-training grew out of silhouette-training in aircraft identification during the last war. The eye is trained to see quickly everything that lies in the visual field.

The University of Wisconsin's project was initiated by Fred Lauritzen, research assistant in the depart-

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ment of art education; Bill Hazard, research assistant in journalism; Keith McGary, Professor of Philosophy; and the late Prof. Horace Fries of the department of philosophy. The project, which began last summer, serves both to train students who take the course and to collect facts.

Students volunteer for the training. They stand in the dark before easels on which huge sheets of drawing paper are fastened and draw images flashed on a screen for one-tenth of a second. Each class-hour some twenty such images—usually abstract—are drawn. During the entire course the students spend twenty hours drawing what they have seen in forty seconds.

Because the drawings are done in the dark, no great accuracy in detail is demanded. The students are expected to coordinate hand and eye and to train the eye to see as much as it can in the short time available. Visual sensitivity is increased. Students learn to realize what is going on in the periphery of vision. The artist's awareness of differences in shapes and brightness and the photographer's sense of balanced composition are heightened. The evidence is strong that for some aspects of vision—position, brightness, size differences, color, depth and emergence of an image from the background—the training improves visual acuity 400 per cent or more.

To the men who are studying flash-training, objectivity now means something on which they can agree. It is the lowest common denominator of experience. All of us color our perceptions with our opinions, fears, hopes and hates. The consequence is that objects appear to be much larger than if they are not emotionally interpreted. No object appears absolutely the same to any two persons.

These differences show up on drawings made during flash-training. No two drawings are the same, yet each draftsman has seen the object in what is to him an effective and useful way.

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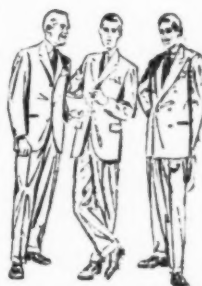
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Modelos

Patterns of an Old City

Continued from page 17

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And this too was something he preferred to leave out of his thoughts. It was useless to dwell on a thing that could not be altered. A man's life was a growing thing, and some times it grew awry and warped, became shapeless and ugly, and there was no way of making it straight or beautiful. It was useless to look at it closely, for there was nothing inside, only a great void, a vast emptiness, a desolation peopled with shadows and echoes, with phantoms of a past that could not be retrieved. Even the pain it awakened was not a real pain but the memory of a pain that had been suffered, that had once been acute and that has finally grown dull and exhausted.

And yet, without actually thinking about it, he could not rid himself of an awareness of it—a depressing awareness aroused by his incongruous deed. The package in his pocket posed a stern, insistent interrogation for which he had no answer. It jarred him out of his fixed complacency, from his mute resignation; it compelled him to confront the dreaded void, and shrinking from it he thought: It is nothing. I am going home. Riding in this crowded bus, as I have thousands of times before, and maybe before long some of the people will be getting off and I'll get a chance to sit down. In all I've had a pleasant day. Nothing has happened out of the ordinary. He recalled with mild chagrin that he had earned no money; but that was nothing unusual. Tomorrow he would collect at least twenty pesos from the woman whom he helped with her tax report, and there might be some other chance business. Things always picked up after a lull, and there was no need of worrying about it. Worry never helped anyone. What a man needed was patience—an endless reserve of patience.

Yes, that's what he had always said to himself. But was it really true? Was patience indeed a virtue? Had it not been in his personal case a grave defect? All his life he had been cheerfully willing to wait for something to happen, and he was still waiting, though his time was running short. No. Perhaps in his case patience has been a kind of self-imposed deception, a shield for cowardice, an unavailing substitute for action, for his lacking will. Perhaps he ought to face it squarely, to admit it to himself, to acknowledge the truth that he had never consciously pursued what is commonly known as success, that he had never been able to formulate a precise notion of what success might signify in his life; that he had merely followed the simplest kind of routine, let things drift along from day to day, merely clinging to a trivial safety rather than venturing to grasp success, vaguely hoping that tomorrow might bring forth some unforeseen and undeserved reward.

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Though indeed this trite routine in itself ultimately comprised his reward, for it provided a refuge from the inner void of his existence. He escaped from it in his daily task at his office—not actually his office to be sure, but a small corner he rented in a real estate agency office housed in a dingy sidestreet building, which sufficed to accommodate his ancient rontop desk adorned with a tarnished plaque bearing his name and calling—*SPECIALIST IN FISCAL MATTERS*—an abstruse and dignified title he had appropriated for himself years before, which, in fact, was a glorified facade for an occupation that largely consisted of petty errands at the government tax offices. Like thousands of others in this bustling city, who mysteriously manage to eke out a livelihood without a capital or craft, as sundry and nondescript go-betweens, as patty facotums, as scribblers, fixers or minor manipulators, standing in queues or moping in waiting room benches, picking up commissions or percentages at this or that, he subsisted on his luck and wits along the margins of the traffic.

He had never consciously endeavored to make a place for himself in the world, considering himself quite fortunate merely to be able to hold the humble and uncertain place he had, and therein was the primary injustice he had meted out to his wife, and the source of unending grudge she harbored against him. She seemed eternally unable to forgive him for his lacking ambition, for his innate weariness and for his habitual incapacity to confront struggle, nor to forgive herself for the irreparable error she committed in choosing him as mate. It was a bleak and cheerless life they lived together, and yet in a strange inexplicable way a fixed and stable life; for some times enduring bonds of human relations are enigmatically forged of such ignoble emotions as persevering odium.

In his youth and during the early years of their marriage, and especially after their daughter was born, he was not entirely devoid of avidity. He tried hard to overcome his innate apathy and get ahead; but the odds seemed always to be against him, and after a time he gave up trying. He mastered the rudiments of his odd calling, fell into a rut; accepted what chance brought him and acquiesced to mediocrity. Life became a peaceful current wherein a man could keep afloat so long as he did not strive to go upstream. Living on the perpetual brink of want, they somehow managed to get along, to subsist through the drift of years which brought on their inevitable sequent changes: Their daughter grew up and got married and went away, and a few years later returned, a widow with a small child; and this for a time disturbed the current, encumbered the peaceful downstream drift. And yet, for a while longer life contained a hope and a tangible substance.

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There was Lalo, his grandson, and his widowed daughter; there was a budding life and a promise. But presently that too was gone. The boy was dead, and their daughter remarried and left them again. The tangible substance vanished, and there was only the void, the utter destitution, the great emptiness, scarcely relieved by his daily task, rendered more desolate by the noxious air of bitterness and frustration he breathed at home.

When he got off at the corner two blocks away from his house and started to walk down the dark and deserted street, he removed the package from the outer coat pocket and concealed it inside the inner breast pocket. His precaution, however, had not been necessary, for his wife was busy in the kitchen as he entered, and did not see him until he came out in his patched and threadbare housecoat and took his seat at the table. They ate their supper of rolls and boiled milk, exchanging amid periods of silence their usual bits of sere, inane and spiritless talk—her lunbago; milk that had now reached the prohibitive price of a peso a liter; the leaking gas-stove; the dog that had been stoned by the neighbors because he seemed to have rabies—words falling into a void like pebbles into a waterless well.

He rose from the table and went to the sala where he usually sat for a while each night reading a newspaper under the bulb of a table lamp that had once had a pink silk tasseled shade which was broken and had never been replaced—the only corner in the house which afforded sufficient light or reading. Here, behind a closed door he usually relaxed in solitude before going to bed.

But this time he left the newspaper unread. He unwrapped the two little skeletons, looped the guiding black threads over his forefingers, and made an attempt to make them dance over the table. At first the tiny white figures responded clumsily to the stiff movements of his hands: they hopped jerkily or turned

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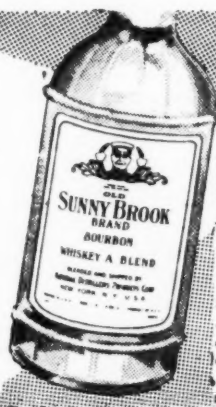


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loosely at the end of the threads; but as he continued, painstakingly striving to modulate the motion of his fingers, they gradually fell into a smoother and more even jiglike cadence. It hardly matched the hawker's beautiful performance, but he was getting on. Presently, surmising that the illusion was marred by the visible threads, he contrived a dark background by arranging three old blackbound ledgers over the table in the semblance of a miniature stage. Now it was better. The threads were now almost invisible; the little skeletons seemed to be performing on their own volition. It was yet a somewhat awkward performance, he thought. It would require more practice; he would have to perfect the motion of his fingers; to make them more pliable; to tug at the threads more gently, more evenly. But he had mastered the trick. It was all a matter of acquiring greater dexterity, of mastering a more gentle manipulation of the threads.

He was too deeply immersed to hear the soft creak of the door or to perceive her as she entered the room and stopped at his side, her mouth dropping open, her eyes widening in stark amaze, and he was startled by

her outcry: "For the love of God, what is this!"

He looked at her blinking, swallowing hard, the tip of his tongue moving over his lips, unable to think of anything to say, the toy skeletons dangling at the end of the threads. "What are you up to?" she yelled. "What idiotic pastime have you discovered for yourself? Hiding yourself like a halfwit to play with... with... I never heard of anything as crazy as... as... You brute! You stupid barbarian! It wouldn't surprise me in the least if you even spent money for this junk—threw away a peso, maybe—brought yourself something to play with! Why, you... you... you... I always knew you were an imbecile, a perfect fool, a loafer and a spendthrift, but now I am beginning to think that you are going off your mind! Going completely crazy! You miserable old idiot! They ought to lock you up!"

While she went on yelling, cursing him bitterly, exhausting her entire reserve of gross invective and insult, he stood speechless, his face revealing no trace of either guilt or protest, only blank confusion; then, without removing his gaze from her hate-ridden eyes, almost unconsciously, he commenced pulling on the threads again, bringing the skeletons to life, making them hop merrily inside their little stage, watching the look of hate and exasperation slowly, strangely, fading from her eyes, slowly changing into sheer bewilderment, observing her mouth opening wide, gaping mutely, her lips twitching grotesquely without uttering a sound, contorting into an inarticulate grimace, then slowly, minutely, changing to a disparaging grin, and suddenly giving vent to a sharp convulsive chuckle. And as he looked at her his own face, yielding, powerless, mirror-like, underwent a similar metamorphosis, and soon the two were chuckling, then laughing, laughing boisterously, unable to stop, laughing on and on as if in the throes of a fit, insane tears streaming from their eyes, their withered bodies shaking as if seized and helpless in the grip of a hilarious madness.

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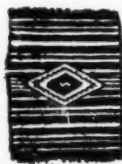
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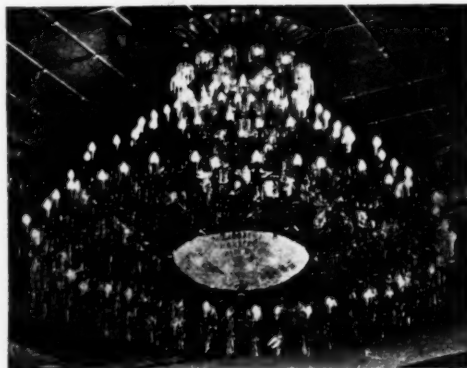
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Encarnación who Wanted Nothing

Continued from page 12

mushrooms below the great palm fronds that moved over so tightly in the brittle blue tropic sky.

Felicianna went back into the house. He could hear her pouring the corn from the basket into a pot for cooking. It made a soft rushing sound, a hungry sound somehow, and in him also was a hungry thing that had no name, a wanting such as he had not known before. This was good, this wanting, this life he had with Felicianna. He must not lose her now.

His eyes searched the sky, the tall palms, the row of thatched houses standing deep in pools of their own shadows. Heat waves shimmered on the grass blades in front of him. In spite of the quiet of the day a sense of uneasiness tugged at him. First now he was wanting Felicianna, and then she was wanting shoes for him, and next he would be wanting a bigger house for his son, and any or all of that could be taken away from him. So it would go on, and there would never be any freedom again. Better to go back to the hills, to take Felicianna there. There they could have their own land, their own milpa, their own lives with no one to give or take away but the good God who understood all men and gave them what their souls deserved.

So it happened that Encarnación decided to get the shoes. Not only to get them, for one cannot just go and buy things like that at the snap of the fingers, but to work for them, and save enough to have the shoes and buy his freedom from Don Gustavo, and go freely back to the hills with all they would need to start a good life there. He would want the shoes, would concentrate on them, and then perhaps the little thieving gods, the little evil ones, would see him it would be the shoes, not Felicianna or his savings.

Everyone said that the shoes made a difference in the lives of Encarnación and Felicianna almost from the first. No longer did Encarnación spend long quiet hours in front of the house making small images and dolls. Now he worked long hours instead for Don



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Gustavo, doing many extra tasks that increased his earnings. Now Feliciano would stand alone, in the door of their house where Encarnación used to stand, gazing in lonely quiet out across the finca to the wide blue sky with its billowing white clouds that changed always, yet never changed. Now she grew silent, and did not laugh as much, and the villaged wagged it's heads as it had wagged it's tongues, and all said no good would come of this thing. On the other hand, they all said too, that it was a good thing for Encarnación to want something at last. Perhaps now the owning of a pair of shoes would make a real man of him, and he would be like other men, struggling to own things and to show other men how important he could be. They did not fear at him so much as they had, and they watched to see if he would now beat his wife and show her who was the man in his house. For a man who did not beat his wife to make her know how she should go, was no man at all in the eyes of the women. That is the way with a woman's heart, she wants to know what she cannot do, and then she will be content and serve well his needs, and brag to other women how strong and sure he is. At least, so they said.

But as for Encarnación, he neither told Feliciano his plan, nor did he not tell her. His arms were as tender, his eyes as full of the warmth that made her heart glad, but his silences were more severe, and when she laughed and danced about him over some new thing or a fiesta, he only frowned and reminded her that she had wanted the shoes and he had no money for anything else now.

Once Feliciano turned on him and stamped her foot and cried out that she wished she had never seen or heard of the shoes. She hated them, for they had taken her love from her, and now their days were filled only with great black, foreign shoes!

Encarnación only pushed her weeping body from him, looking at her child's face suffused with its bewildered sorrow with curtains drawn in his eyes against his love of her and said quietly, "It was your wish to have the shoes. I am only getting what you asked for," and went back to the Casa Grande to

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work the harder until late into the night. For once he had decided a thing he would not turn from that purpose.

It took two years to earn enough extra to buy the shoes, and have besides enough to pay his debts to Don Gustavo, for in those times a man from the fields could earn at most fifty centavos in one day.

He went one morning and collected his small sum, and paid Don Gustavo. He did not say he was leaving. He only said that he wished permission to go to the big fiesta at San Juan Bautista and there buy a few things his wife had asked him to get. Don Gustavo nodded and said only, "Except that you are not a man to get drunk, Encarnación, I should not give you the entire sum at once!" And Encarnación, his hat held in his hands, in assumed humility, hunched his shoulders a fraction higher, and with a courteous "ya me voy," left as quickly as he could.

That night he lay in his hamaca without sleep. He was full of plans. He could hear Feliciano putting together the food he would take with him. The chicken and tortilla-filled beans and the leaf-wrapped ball of posole for his lunch. She moved quietly enough, but he could not sleep for thinking about her. She had been angry yesterday because he did not ever let her go to fiestas; because he kept her home always even when other women went. Couldn't she see that she was not like other women to him? That he could not bear to have her walk in the plaza at San Juan Bautista and hear the men say things about her legs, her smile? That was not for one such as she. He would take her to the hills, and then their lives would be their own and there would not always be somebody else having something that she would want. There, they would want only each other and their children and the good sun, and the cool rain, and the gods would keep the earth warm and the nights cool for their strong living.

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Once, Feliciano came to him and stood by his hammock, and he could feel the warmth of her body where it pressed against his shoulders, and the cool of her fingers, that still held the faint odor of even fresh corn paste just washed from them, touching his forehead and his hair. But he pretended sleep. It would not do to let her know his plans, to say out loud how much he loved her; not yet. He could not tempt the little thieving gods with saying out loud what he now wanted, Feliciano and only Feliciano, with his whole life.

But Encarnación was not to go to the fiesta and get the shoes. As he was putting on his camisa in the morning, fresh ironed by Feliciano's tired hands, Enrique came into the house with his obsequious smile. Don Gustavo was having a number of guests ride in that day. He would need Encarnación. It was a pity, because now Encarnación couldn't get the shoes, but that was the way life was. Enrique put his foot up on a chair and dusted his shoes off with his red kerchief. They were old now, and the one brass knob was broken and the other completely gone, but Enrique flicked at them with the kerchief with careful superiority.

"Too bad, my friend, for now you will have to wait another year to get shoes—like mine." And he smirked at Feliciano and walked out of the door.

Encarnación spoke rapidly. Feliciano was right. He should have let her go more often to the fiestas. Now she would go with the Domingo family, stay two days, and get his shoes. "And here," he added, "here is twelve pesos extra to buy something for yourself."

Perhaps it was because she was so tired, or perhaps because of the anger in her at Enrique, or maybe it is just a woman's way when she has waited too long, but Feliciano turned on Encarnación; her eyes blazed at him and her words struck at him. Never would he take her himself, but now it was good enough that she go and get the shoes and do his bidding! And he added twelve pesos as a price for this service! What marriage was this, after all, where the husband slaved for shoes day and night and nothing was so important as the horrible black things that like a demon had come between them. Shoes! She wished she had never heard of them!

Encarnación listened to her with wide-spreading astonishment, at the core of it an uncertain fear. He went and stood before her. He took her elbows and held her up by them, lifting her to her toes. He looked down at her wide eyes silently, the old sorrow in them, the lack-luster gaze of a man who has been taught that nothing he wanted matters. And yet deep in them was something finer than this, deep in them

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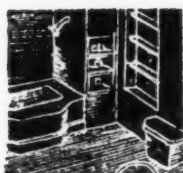
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was the wormth of his love for Feliciana. But these things he did not speak about. Feliciana, looking up at him, waiting for the words that would make all her waiting disappear to nothingness, waiting to be told what she could see in his face, heard only:

"I will give you the size of my foot on a piece of paper. You will go and come back as I have said."

For a moment Encarnación formed the words of their escape in his mind, for a moment he wanted to tell her that they would go to the hills and that he would be free, and there he could have his own milpa, and there her life would be good. But he did not. He only put his cheek to her forehead and went out to work one more day for Don Gustavo.

Encarnación woke in the early dawn of the morning that was to be the most wonderful day of his life. He lay in the hammock, staring at the first pale light that made a striped pattern on the hard packed earth floor, sifting as it did between the palings of the thatched house. His feeling of expectancy grew, and yet underneath it was an uneasiness. He felt Feliciana near him, as if she were standing there, about to stir to warmth the coals of last night's fire on the stove. There was an air in the room as if her skirts had just set the cool morning into motion as she walked through the door. But the room was empty, Feliciana was not there.

Slowly Encarnación swung his feet out of the hammock and down to the floor. He stepped down and stood, a growing surprise and repulsion coming upon him as he looked at what lay beside his feet. There were two shoes, black, shiny, that would come high above his ankle, with brass knobs at the top to secure the strings. A white piece of paper stood in one of them, and this, blindly, Encarnación stared at. It was written on, but the words meant nothing to his eyes. The questions in his mind tormented him into haste. Had something happened to Feliciana? Why hadn't she come? Perhaps she needed him.

Don Gustavo was busy that morning. It was more than two hours that Encarnación sat in the waiting room at the plantation office, holding the paper that would tell him what message Feliciana had sent him.

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He sat stonily silent, not even looking at the paper in his hand; staring at a round spot of sunlight that came from a reflected knob on the office door. When finally he was called in to confront Don Gustavo and stood in his huarraches, with his hat in his hand, Don Gustavo was impatient. What was this nonsense about shoes? He read the note and put it down with a shrug. Feliciano had used the twelve pesos to get a public writer to make this letter for him. She had gone away with some people; he would not care where, since he wanted in this life only the shoes. Since he had forgotten that she was his, who loved him, and had even forgotten the freedom of his hills. She hoped the shoes would fit him well.

It took two days for the shoes to burn. Encarnación sat by them, staring at the evil smelling ashes until they were quite gone and only the small brass knobs remained bright in the grey pile.

Everyone shook his head. It was an old saying, that when good goes out the front door, evil comes in the back. The village wondered at the silent figure that sat by the smouldering shoes. It did not understand, but Encarnación knew what he must do.

At last, on the third day, when there was nothing at all left of the shoes, Encarnación shut the door to their little house and walked out of the village in his huarraches, walked slowly away from the village into the forests on the trail that wound through the heavy jungles up toward the hills.

Convicts and An Execution

Continued from page 24

and he roused himself for his last act. With remarkable grace he greeted his final hour, from the moment he said, "I could not have chosen a better day on which to die" to the moment the rifle bullets plowed into him.

On our way to the Cerro de las Campanas beyond the city, we drove past the Iturbide Theater, where the trial of the three M's, Maximilian, Miramón, and Mejía, had taken place. The Emperor had to be tried by proxy. The aristocratic Miramón and the Indian Mejía had sat side by side on the same bench and



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received their sentences promptly. (The bench is a prize exhibit in the Federal Palace.) Expert Mexican lawyers defended the Emperor ably, but his fate was considered a foregone conclusion by those who knew Benito Juárez. Yet the vote of the six jurors was divided: three for death, three for banishment. The foreman settled the matter by deciding on the death penalty.

We had noticed flags at half-mast here and there about the town and now remarked particularly the one before the theater. I asked what for. Esperón did not know. But the placard on the wall beneath the flag had the answer. We stopped the cab. The tribute was to commemorate the fifty-first anniversary of the death of Benito Juárez.

"See, the people put their flags at half-mast fifty-one years after Juárez's death," Esperón said. "They know that without him there might not be even a semblance of democracy in Mexico today. But don't think Juárez is the great patriot to all Mexico, as George Washington is to the United States. He is so only to those who support the Revolution and the Constitution on 1917. To many of the old families he is anathema."

In his own day, Juárez was not solidly backed by his own people. For the most part the Indians fought with the white upper classes on the side of the Emperor and the Church. The mixed bloods fought with Juárez. The sensational execution was symbolic. By the Emperor's side stood the white Mexican, General Miramón, and the full-blooded Indian, General Mejía. The firing squad was mestizo.

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"The changes aren't coming as fast as the planners and the idealists had hoped," Esperón said as we drove on. "But we have gone a long way since 1917."

At the end of Calle de la Fábricas, we came into a country road. The platinum-green cactus flaunted



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its coronets of coral-colored fruits, sweet as honey inside the shells. On low stone walls washed garments were spread out to dry. Bees were humming greedily about pomegranate blossoms. Bright-colored birds were copulating on low tree branches. Gilded flies swarmed about something in a ditch. Three colts frisked in a pasture. Noon tide intensified the aliveness of nature.

When our car turned to the right, we traversed a flat meadow, and then to the left rose the Hill of Bells. Built over the place where Maximilian met death is a little chapel in brown stone, which the Austrian Government ordered erected in 1901, to replace the three slabs that marked the spots where the three M's fell. The Austrians were rather niggardly in honoring their Hapsburg prince. The project cost only ten thousand dollars and has the earmarks of a thing done out of a sense of duty. The chapel is ordinary, without a hint of inspiration by the architect, and no more impressive than a one-room railway station at a Tirolean village. What a memorable job, I thought, another Trenceras might have turned out here!

Against the bulk of a crumbling adobe structure where Maximilian had been captured, the three leaders of the imperialist forces took their stand. The Emperor yielded the center place of honor to General Miramón with insistent courtesy. It was his last command. To both the generals he gave a farewell embrace in the Mexican fashion. To the presiding priest, who turned faint at the imminent occurrence, he offered smelling salts. Then he handed each member of the firing squad a gold piece, imploring them to shoot straight, and to spare his face for his family's sake. He made a brief patriotic statement about his sincere love for his adopted country. He took one last look at the towers of Querétaro and the invulnerable beauty of Mexico's blue sky. Then he nodded to the lieutenant to signal his men to shoot.

The five shots rang out in the crystal clarity of the morning. Maximilian dropped to his knees and grabbed his face in horror and agony. One bullet had torn out an eye. He fell prone, crying more in despair than accusation, "Hombres!" The lieutenant, aghast, commanded the men to shoot again. To the bitter end

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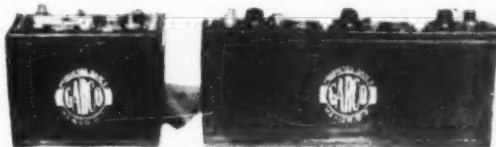
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everything connected with Maximilian's Mexican venture seems to have been bungled.

We turned our backs to the chapel and stood on the terrace. The acres before us had been transformed into a public park and a tree nursery. A painted wooden sign, for all recreation-seekers to read, said in bold black letters, "A people that respects, and causes to be respected, flowers and plants, gives a sign of its culture." In the playing-fields at the foot of the hill on the south side, boys in varicolored shorts were having a lively game of soccer.

I looked off to the city. The distant structures seemed opal-tinted like a vision in a mirage. "But you are right," Esperón said, when I hinted at what I saw. "Some of the building stones dug from the region are full of opaliferous particles."

"But first let's satisfy the inner man. We are already late for luncheon."

ARCHITECTURAL BEGINNINGS:

Continued from page 14

the province of this writer to attempt to add at length to the arguments as to the origin of man in the Western Hemisphere; but a brief résumé of some of the theories in this regard and a brief analysis of some of the evidences of culture man has shown have a bearing on his later work. Such fantastic theories as approach by way of the lost continent of Atlantis or that the Mexicans are descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel have long been thoroughly discredited by scientists. Yet, on the other hand, assumptions that man's evolution did not take him very far back in this part of the world are based on the negative evidence that no anthropoid apes nor their remains have been found in the Western Hemisphere and that there have never been found any remains which correspond to those of Palaeolithic Man of the Eastern Hemisphere. Based on possible future discoveries, such an indigenuous origin is, however, within the realm of possibility. But, so far, the more positive evidence of his physical similarity to man of the east, particularly in his mongoloid characteristics, combined with favorable geographical considerations, would seem to bear out the preponderance of scientific opinion that he had crossed over from Asia by way of Bering Strait, perhaps ten, perhaps even twenty thousand or more years ago, and, throughout many centuries, had gradually migrated southward.

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It is significant that the remains of Archaic men at the Pedregal show them to have been agriculturists, and therefore to have reached at least the beginning of a sedentary life in which they could indulge in the cultural pursuits of pottery-making, sculpture, and architecture. There is little doubt that they were preceded by nomadic tribes; and the gradual development which brought them to the point where we first find them must have occupied a period of many centuries; indeed, recent discoveries have been made in other places in North America of campfires and weapons buried beneath remains of animals long extinct. Between these periods they learned to domesticate the wild teacentli plant and produce the maize which we commonly and rather confusingly call corn. Architecture can develop only after agriculture develops, since it is the assurance of a continuous food supply that makes possible the indulgence in the intellectual and emotional pursuits of art and religion. They are the children of agriculture. This is as true in Mexico as it has been shown to be in ancient Egypt. Crude as Cuicuilco may be from an architectural standpoint, it is important in identifying the men who built it as the first Americans who were on the way to culture. It was the beginning of architecture in North America.

It is also significant that the one known monument of the period was the archetype of a more highly developed architecture based on the same general concepts and with an apparently similar religious background. The great pyramids of the later Toltecs are but advanced Cuicuilcos. As at Cuicuilco, the altars or temples which surmounted them have almost entirely disappeared, but, from all of the evidence at hand, the Toltec culture was an outgrowth of the Archaic. The great Toltec Pyramid of the Sun at San Juan Teotihuacán, northeast of Mexico City, represents a tremendous advance architecturally. The contrast between the crude early mound and the much later magnificent pyramid is great; but the concepts are the same, though just what happened on the plateau during those intervening centuries no one as yet knows. In this connection it may not be amiss to say a word about the popular fantasy of possible Egyptian origin of the pyramids in Mexico.

As it has long been considered fair sport for guides and writers of guidebooks on Mexico to compare the area of the pyramids there with the great pyramids of Egypt (unfavorably to Egypt, but whispering, if mentioning at all, the comparative heights), so, too, has it been a pastime of amateurs to argue that becau-



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se both civilization were pyramid builders, the Mexicans must have been influenced in their work by the ancient Egyptians, a few have dared to reverse the procedure. Let us briefly analyze the possibilities.

Though both were agricultural peoples, their agricultural methods and their agricultural products were entirely different. The culture of the Indians in Mexico was a "hoe culture," with no draft animals; that of the Egyptians was a "plow culture," with oxen used in drawing the plow, as pictured on the walls of ancient tombs. If the Egyptians had been so generous with their instructions in pyramidal buildings, it seems strange that they did not go back closer to fundamentals and give the Mexicans at least one team of oxen and perhaps a cart. From all indications to date, the ancient Americans did not know the principle of the wheel. The ancient Egyptians used the donkey in harvesting the grain; and, although the Mexico of today is infested with burros, especially on the highways, the only domestic animal the Mexicans had before the coming of the Spaniards was the dog. The Egyptians' crops were principally barley and wheat; while maize, unknown in the Eastern Hemisphere, had been gradually developed in the Western until it became the most important crop there. The gradual development, combined with increasingly numerous discoveries of man's antiquity on this continent and the wide differences in languages of the continents, should provide convincing evidence that civilized man's beginnings in America as civilized man were without help from the Eastern World. If the architectural germ of Cuicuilco did not antedate the building of the Pyramid of Cheops (this is still a moot point) but was influenced by the Egyptian construction, the instructors fell down badly in supervising that rather crude pile.

As far as the later pyramids are concerned, though somewhat (and only somewhat) similar in form to the

Egyptian, their function are as different as the cultures behind them. The Egyptian pyramid was built as a royal tomb; the pyramid of Mexico was a base for a temple. The pyramid of Egypt was carried up to a pointed apex, of stones averaging several tons, with a smooth exterior surface of polished stone; the pyramid of Mexico (never a true pyramid, but always truncated—in fact, usually a series of superimposed progressively smaller, truncated pyramids) had an inner core of adobe or of rubble, and was faced with comparatively small stones in a series of terraces, with stairways for ascending to the flat top, where a shrine was placed.

Metal-working, known to the ancient Egyptians and, indeed, responsible for their rapid development when the great pyramids there were built, was apparently unknown in Mexico until within three or four hundred years before the Conquest. Even during that later period the work was confined largely to small art objects. These included very finely wrought ornaments of gold; but in their construction work, in spite of a rudimentary knowledge of the use of raw copper, the builders continued to use stone tools up to the last. Theirs was, essentially, still a Stone Age.

In trying to account for the civilization of the ancient Americans and their architecture and its allied arts, the theory of diffusion seems a rather attractive one to embrace, but in view of the constant advances, backed up by sounder logic, of the truth of evolution—in architecture as well as in man—the theory is more romantic than reasonable.

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